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THE FABIANS: SCIENTIFIC SOCIALISTS

EARLY HISTORY

The Economic Revolution

The nineteenth century was one of congestion. The hum of newly devised machines and the din of the crowded world markets announced to the world an economic revolution. This revolution was to give birth to two ambitious offspring, children fathered by "Wealth of Nations" and weaned on the *laissez-faire* doctrine. Their birth was natural and legitimate. They were called capital and labor.

Capital and labor enjoyed a spoiled childhood; society quickly adopted them. They were stamped with the brand of their sire and were recognized as the promise of future wealth of all nations. Capital and labor promised riches for all and promptly set about to fulfill that promise. Their stay seemed assured.

But the early days of these novices in world economy saw them stumbling about, disrupting the old established systems. So revolutionary was their approach that society could not keep pace with their progress. The result was that, in an already congested and confused world, there arose such disturbances as widespread unemployment, poor working conditions, long factory hours, woman and child labor, squalid living conditions and an ever widening gap between rich and poor.

At the close of the century attention was no longer riveted on these offspring of the new *laissez-faire* doctrine, but on the abuses which seemed to accompany them. Some observers were preoccupied with the idea that capital and labor were too much at loggerheads and that they were splitting the world into camps or "classes." A few believed that their characteristic outcry "let me be" should no longer be heeded. On the contrary, they frantically asserted that the government should keep the strictest control over capital and labor and discipline them at every turn. Marx and Engels heralded this new theory and Marx jarred the world with *Das Kapital* which strained to give birth to Socialism, an unnatural child.

To many the time seemed ripe for a doctrine of class warfare. No one could deny the unsettled conditions, but few were willing

to dig to the root cause of them. Whatever the cause, change was needed, perhaps even one of revolutionary proportions. Socialism seemed fanatic and turbulent enough to effect such an upheaval, and many on the continent fell captive to its strange appeal.

Founding of the Fabian Society

England, though disconcerted within, retained its exterior sobriety, smartly turning up its nose at the revolutionary aspect of Socialism. No such class warfare would interest any Englishman; Marx had admitted this himself. To the Englishman, Socialism would have to be stripped of its revolutionary cockade before it appeared acceptable. This latter development was largely brought about by a band of intellectuals, grouped together in a genial discussion club, devoted to the cause of winning for mankind the "higher life."

In the autumn of 1883, Thomas Davidson conducted lectures on "A Fellowship of the New Life." Frank Podmore, Edward Pease, H. H. Champion, Hubert Bland and a handful of others were infatuated with the idea; they mused whether a communist society could achieve such a fascinating objective. More papers were read, more enthusiasm was elicited and finally on Jan. 4, 1884, these "practical humanitarians" bound themselves in a study club to discover what practical measures society could take to establish the New Life. They called themselves the Fabians.

The Fabian Society realized that the New Life or Socialism would not soon find a welcome haven in the British mentality. But they would rely on "the inevitability of gradualness."[1] Hence the name Fabian, after the Roman General, Fabius Cunctator, who defeated Hannibal by dilatory and delaying tactics.

Famous Fabians

They began with nothing but their own genius. From its earliest days the Fabian Society has counted among its proponents some of the most brilliant minds in England. The early Society could boast of G. B. Shaw, H. G. Wells, Rupert Brooke, William Clarke, Annie Besant and others. Modern Fabians include Margaret and

[1] Margaret Cole, ed., *The Webbs and Their Work* (London, 1949), opp. 177.

G. D. H. Cole, Harold Laski, John Strachey, Clement Attlee, Sir Stafford Cripps, to mention a few. The Fabians became the "intellectuals of Socialism" and that so exclusively that they created a distinctive class of socialists as G. B. Shaw was forced to admit.[2] Hence, the Fabian Society was a living contradiction to its own socialistic bias against all class structure.

The Fabian Spirit

With such a novel background and with such ingenious adherents, one might expect the Fabian spirit to be a spontaneous creation marked by its originality and its distinctiveness.

One must hesitate, however, to outline any "Fabian spirit" for the very fact that few Fabians would agree to any spirit as orthodoxly Fabian.[3] Fabians are independent socialists and Fabianism is largely molded to and by the individual Fabian. But there are characteristic marks which are more or less common and these we can enumerate, hoping to effect a valid description of Fabianism while pointing out with caution the necessary incompleteness and limitation of such a generalization.

1. *Socialist Basis*

Fabians are basically socialists, though the founding Fabians had no clear concept of what Socialism entailed. Even today Fabians will not agree as to what exactly is their socialistic basis, though they all feel sure it lies at the root of Fabianism. They felt their purpose was to attain the "New Life." They claimed Fabianism was ethical, on the grounds that: ". . . the very reason for it is our will to increase the sum of human happiness and to deal justly and kindly by our fellow men."[4] Fabian Rule I states Fabianism aims at:

> . . . the establishment of a society in which equality of opportunity will be assured and economic power and privileges of individuals and

---

[2] G. B. Shaw, *The Fabian Society: Its Early History* (London, 1892), 4 (Tract 41).

[3] Edward R. Pease, *The History of the Fabian Society* (New York, 1916), p. 226.

[4] G. D. H. Cole, *Fabian Socialism* (London, 1943), p. 164. We notice here the cold ethics of a God-less humanitarianism, the exclusion of God as having nothing to do with the end and purpose of man.

classes abolished through the collective ownership and democratic control of the economic resources of the community.[5]

The life work of the Fabians then has been the "working out of the application of the broad principles of socialism to the industrial political environment of England."[6] More concretely they might say it is to abolish poverty.[7] In particular they aim at the destruction of the competitive system since that assures the happiness of only the few at the expense of the many.[8] Hence, despite all the reservations the Fabian may care to make, he is basically a socialist.

2. *The Fabian, Always the Individual*

Sydney Webb once remarked that ". . . the activity of the Fabian Society is the sum of the activities of its members."[9] Here we have another characteristic trait of Fabianism. Each member remains an independent thinker and the Society imposes nothing on the individual except the broad and vague principles of a confused Socialism. You will find Fabians on both sides of political and economic questions; some are fanatic socialists, others are lukewarm; a few claim to be "Christian Socialists." Throughout the history of the Fabian Society, attempts have been made to set down a party orthodoxy and to penalize or expel those who wandered from its tenets, but each attempt has met with failure.

3. *Changing Element*

Perhaps the dedication of so many independent thinkers to the task of establishing Socialism in England has created that frame of mind typical of the Fabian, namely, that nothing is final, that change is always necessary.[10] The Society's earliest secretary, Edward Pease, wrote:

I can only express the hope that as long as the Fabian Society lasts it will be ever open to new ideas, ever conscious that nothing is final, ever aware that the world is enormously complex, and that no singular formula will summarise or circumscribe its infinite variety.[11]

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[5] *Ibid.*, p. 172.
[6] Pease, *op. cit.*, p. 240.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. 257.
[8] *Ibid.*, p. 32.
[9] *Ibid.*, p. 77.
[10] Shaw, *Tract 41*, p. 25.
[11] Pease, *op. cit.*, p. 255.

Such a caution can be of real value in developing an exhaustive and sincere approach to the social sciences. However, when such an attitude is so thorough-going that it penetrates to the very core of an organization's principles, as happens in Fabianism, it can vitiate those principles entirely. This is one reason why you will look in vain for a set of solid and unchanging principles guiding the Fabian. The moment decides the policy; the Fabian seizes the moment.

4. *Research Technique*

In one area of knowledge, however, the Fabians proved themselves definite and exact. They had always stood appalled at the aggrieved social condition. Their ability to single out these abuses became unerring as one by one they scientifically investigated and systematically reported on the shameful economic paroxysms. They probed the distribution of income, adult suffrage, the wants of the farm laborer; they advocated an eight hour day, a Poor Law Reform, and social democracy. No one could deny the existence of such abuses and the Fabians were soon considered specialists in feeling the economic pulse of the nation. Their accounts of actual conditions were so scholarly in approach and so complete and scientific in compilation that Fabian statements found their way into Parliament, informing the Members on the social and economic health of the land. This greatly increased the Fabian prestige.

5. *Fabian Tracts*

Their surveys were published in pamphlet form and spread throughout the land. Soon Fabian tracts became a familiar item to the social-minded Britisher. The Fabians reported on practically everything. In 1887 *Facts for Socialists* tried to prove that every change made by Socialism could be justified according to the most scientific postulates of economics. By 1915 it had gone through eleven editions. In 1893 every department of state was scrutinized and instructed in the tract *To Your Tents, O Israel.* Fabian tracts reported on education, unemployment, feeding of school children, and even on such topics as how to build cottages properly. Soon Parliament found itself enacting the Fabian policies in part or in whole. The Fabians were widely respected as the

scientists of Socialism. As Shaw put it, "From 1887 to 1889 we were the recognized bullies and swashbucklers of advanced economics."[12]

6. Permeation of Parties

Such an indirect influence on Parliament was effective, but some Fabians were for a more penetrating control. The Fabians early realized the impracticality of forming their own independent political party.[13] They decided on a policy of infiltrating the then existing Parties. Thus, the Fabians were affiliated with both Liberal and Labour Parties, while two-thirds of the early Fabians belonged to the International Labour Party and practically all the ILP leaders were Fabians. This anomaly continued till 1913, when it was decided that the three socialist groups in England should unite within the Labour Party, forming a united Socialist council.[14] H. G. Wells, in his famous Report of 1906, championed direct political influence on the government and, though at that time it was not endorsed by the Society and eventually caused his resignation, the socialist union within the Labour Party was a partial realization of his proposals.

Why did not the Fabians join the Socialist League and Social-Democratic Party? Shaw answered correctly when he alluded to the queer Fabian contribution of forming a peculiar class of Socialists to remove all class-structure: "The apparent reason was that we were then middle class all through, rank and file. . . . It undoubtedly prevented working-men from joining the Fabians whilst we were holding our meetings in one another's drawing rooms."[15]

Fabian Essays of 1889

In 1889 the Old Guard of Fabianism, realizing that they had caught the attention of England without having anything to contribute to it, set about anglicizing Socialism in a collection of essays edited by G. B. Shaw. The purpose of the volume was to remove once and for all the bugaboo of revolution from the socialist concept and present the socialist scheme in the language

[12] Shaw, *Tract 41*, p. 16.
[13] Pease, *op. cit.*, pp. 207-208.
[14] *Ibid.*, p. 210.
[15] Shaw, *Tract 41*, p. 4.

of the ordinary Briton. They aimed at establishing the thesis that Socialism was the inevitable effect of the necessary economic evolution begun by the Industrial Revolution and that Socialism was consonant with the strictest scientific approach to the social and economic world. So much insistence was placed on preparing Socialism for sale on a domestic market that no attempt to outline a foreign policy was made. The book has sold over a quarter of a million copies and the stellar success of the volume has outshone the brightest expectations of the Fabian authors. The profound influence of this book in orientating the British mentality to Socialism cannot be overestimated.

The Contribution of the Early Fabians

By their tracts, and principally by *Fabian Essays,* the Fabian Society prepared Socialism so that it could be easily digested. The Fabians gave Socialism a scientific aura, surveying the British scene and cataloguing their findings in a scholarly and literary fashion. Parliament leaned on their reports; soon Fabian suggestions were being sanctioned. The Fabians indoctrinated any and every Party to which they could gain access, electing more and more socialists to power. The Fabian was soon the Prince Charming of the Socialist Cause, stressing the excesses of the capitalist system and constantly chanting them to the wearied ears of the harried worker. The Fabians promised that Socialism would lead to the "New Life." And little by little, because they never went too deeply into details but kept to vague generalities when explaining their brand of Socialism, England grew steadily more aligned to the socialistic trend, till at last, in the election of 1945, a Labour Party was chosen which delivered Parliament and England to the Fabian Socialists. Then the intoxicating dream came to an abrupt end.

MODERN FABIANISM

Fabians in Power

The election of 1945 brought the Labour Party and Fabian Socialism to power in Great Britain; it was the opportunity for which they had so patiently waited. Now they could effect the uplift of society.

The inevitability of gradualness brought to the Fabian only disillusionment. The first bitter lesson he learned was that nationalization did not mean automatic progress; rather, it seemed to beget economic chaos. When Alfred Barnes, head of the Transport Board, was asked why they had nationalized motor transport, he answered: "I am advised that if we take over the railroads and do not take over motor transport we shall never be able to compete with motor transport."[16] This did not appeal to the British voter and the Fabian's swift flight to power was sharply checked by the return of Churchill.

A New Approach

Fabian Essays of 1889 had plotted the Fabian course during the nineteenth century; *New Fabian Essays* of 1952 "charts a new road in the atomic age, on the ground of new knowledge which has shed the earlier Society's illusions about automatic progress, and its indifference to the world overseas."[17] The Fabians are on the march again.

Previously the Fabians had armed themselves with precise, scientific knowledge of Britain's social condition and had contented themselves with a basis of vague, socialist principles. The emphasis now seems to be placed on theory. Mr. Attlee indicated as much in his preface to *New Fabian Essays:*

> . . . there is an important second cross current in the Labour Party which reflects the belief that tactics and techniques cannot simply be empirical but must be based on fresh theoretical analysis as the historical situation changes.[18]

Perhaps the Fabian has learned from his bitter experience. To find out, we must investigate the new Fabian policy.

Some Startling Admissions

C. A. R. Crosland, quoting Professor Arthur Lewis, defines the new Socialism as "being about equality." He explains: "And by

[16] Alfred Edwards, "Lessons From Britain's Socialist Experiment," *Reader's Digest,* May, 1949, p. 42.

[17] R. H. S. Crossman, ed., *New Fabian Essays* (New York, 1952), Intro. by Clement Attlee.

[18] *Ibid.*

equality is meant not simply equality of opportunity on the American model, but equality of status in the widest sense—subjective as well as objective."[19]

With Socialism adequately defined, R. H. S. Crossman, editor of *New Fabian Essays,* outlines a philosophy of Fabianism. I will quote some of the astounding directives he lays down. No comment, I believe, is necessary.

> The test of Socialism is the extent to which it shapes a people's institutions to the moral standards of freedom—*even at the cost of a lower standard of living or the surrender of an empire.*[20]
>
> After all, it is not the pursuit of happiness but the enlargement of freedom which is socialism's highest aim.[21]
>
> The socialist, therefore, while prepared to join the Atlantic Alliance in order to defend himself against the present threat of Soviet imperialism to Europe, must accept both intellectually and emotionally the fact that communism outside Europe is still a liberative force.[22]
>
> The success we seek is a balance of world power, and in that balance the restraining influence of a communist China on Russia may be as vital as that of a socialist Britain on the USA.[23]

The chapter including these remarks is entitled "Towards a Philosophy of Socialism." The Fabian Philosophy, then, will aim at freedom and equality as its goal, which must be attained "even at the cost of a lower standard of living." Further, the Fabian manifests an indifferent attitude towards Communism, giving dark meaning to the phrase "even at . . . the surrender of an empire." Freedom and equality form the treasure for which the Fabian is willing to sacrifice anything; it is most important that Englishmen especially should realize what these two elements mean to the Fabian.

Social Services

The inequality of classes is described as stemming from the still ". . . gross maldistribution of property and capital."[24] This class economy must be eradicated by more economic measures.[25]

[19] *Ibid.*, p. 61.
[20] *Ibid.*, p. 15 (italics mine).
[21] *Ibid.*, p. 29.
[22] *Ibid.*, p. 17.
[23] *Ibid.*, p. 32.
[24] *Ibid.*, p. 65.
[25] *Ibid.*, pp. 62, 63.

The great socialist leveller is a system of fluctuating taxes which draws more from the rich to make them more like the poor. Then more can be poured into social services. The Fabians admit that this simply means paying higher prices for some goods that other goods might be received free and ". . . this is not necessarily good."[26] But is not this process itself a limitation of liberty? A worker receives a certain amount of purchasing power; because of high taxes for various social services, the state decides how that worker should spend a portion of his already limited purchasing power. In other words, social services force a man, contrary to his *free* opinion and to what he independently believes are his own needs, to marshall his funds behind social services. The vicious cycle has run its full course. Socialists begin by fostering social services to increase freedom and end by limiting a man's actual freedom of choice. Roy Jenkins, a Fabian Essayist, frankly but reservedly admits that this process should be viewed "with grave suspicion."[27]

Poverty

The devoted Fabian is the arch enemy of poverty. His aim is laudable. How does he fulfill his aim? Principally by multiplying social services and taxing the rich.

The Fabian destroys poverty by distributing it.[28] He considers poverty a quantitative thing; hence, his reasoning that to distribute it among more people will decrease the overall effect is logical. That is why he taxes the rich in such exorbitant proportions. The rich will be deprived of a stock of capital and will be rendered "poor" while their taxes will be channeled into social services for the benefit of all, primarily the poor, and that will make the poor "rich." Today all England will testify that this is not true.

The Fabian policy towards poverty has done nothing more than spread it and, should social services continue, it will not be long till England will be rightly dubbed the "United Kingdom of Paupers."

[26] *Ibid.*, p. 63.

[27] *Ibid.*, p. 76.

[28] John T. Flynn, *The Road Ahead* (New York, 1949). Cf. the chapter entitled "The Socialist Reality."

Education

In grandiose and majestic strokes of oversimplification, Margaret Cole traces the Fabian policy on education. Absolute and complete equality is once again the goal. Children are to be placed in common schools, receiving common opportunities, progressing at a common pace.

> I do not see how any socialist can find it a good that children of different social classes should be separately educated or that, supposing present class distinctions to be obsolescent, children of outstanding intellectual gifts should be skimmed off the ruck and trained to be leaders, professors, managers, or what you will.[29]

Margaret Cole has here done what few socialists have dared to do; she has simply driven her socialist principles to their ultimate conclusions where the absurdity becomes self-evident.

First, the social rating of any school does not fix nor determine the social rating of any individual person. Even in England, where heritage is accorded a place of honor, an individual's place in society is determined by his own character and endeavour.

Secondly, men are not made in an identical mold. Some topics of study will positively halt the intellectual advancement of some, while furthering the progress of others. Hence, the need for different types of schools even on the high school level. If a boy envisions a career in the field of letters, a course in mechanical training, even though it be the "common" course, is useless. The main reason alleged by Mrs. Cole for such common training seems to be that, even for a literary man, a course in mechanical training will add to the formation of the "whole man." The "whole man" will then be able to understand his fellow men.[30] But cannot Mrs. Cole understand the mechanic from her ordinary experience of everyday life? Or can only *trained* mechanics understand mechanics and only *trained* writers understand writers? Mrs. Cole herself has shown understanding of many trades and professions. Whence came that knowledge? Surely, from no "common" school. The ideal of educating the "whole man" is basic; the means the

[29] Crossman, ed., *New Fabian Essays,* p. 109.

[30] *Ibid.,* p. 109.

Fabians choose, common schools, is puerile in its oversimplicity, failing, as it does, to consider the common nature of man.

Thirdly, why should not children of outstanding intellectual gifts be "skimmed off the ruck"? Does Mrs. Cole's concept of equality demand that intellectual progress be common? It certainly seems so. Obviously, there will be inevitable differences of attainment; Our Lord's parable of the talents was not without point nor basis in human nature.

A cloud of confusion envelops the Fabian approach. Certainly all men should have ample access to education. Some men will be philosophers; others will be carpenters. The philosopher requires education as much as the carpenter needs training. But obviously, if the respective professions are to be mastered in any proficient degree, they cannot be taught in the same common classroom. Classification of talents, courses, schools, professions are all dictated by the varying inclinations of human nature. The Fabian concept of "common schools" therefore is unnatural.

Equality

Finally, we come to the inner core of the new Fabian Socialism. It was defined earlier as being ". . . equality—both subjective and objective." Let us briefly analyze this concept.

The Fabian passionately desires a society in which men are distinguished from one another not by their property or wealth, but by their differences of character. Once again, their aim is laudable. How do they propose to attain such an end? By abolishing private property and skimming off the disproportionate wealth of the rich in taxes. The Fabian negative approach is almost pessimistic.

All men are created equal by God, that is, they are all equally ordained to their final end and are granted the proper means to attain that end. All have an individual worth as true sons of God and all are recipients of the proper means for attaining God. Any inequality here would be fundamental; but fundamentally, all men are equal. Hence, all men have an equal, fundamental, eternal value. This is objective equality.

All men do not have equal talents, defects or inclinations, if by equal we mean identical. Some men are endowed with amazing

organizational ability; these men, given the freedom necessary to exercise such talent, usually rise to the forefront of their respective fields. Others, endowed with the genius of a poet, for example, are usually not suited to a career in business. Granted, the distinctions are not hard and fast. Some seem to have ability in every line; others in none. Hence, all men are subjectively unequal.

Nor will all men exploit their talents equally. Some men can be exposed to the finest education, to the most promising opportunity, to the ideal situations, and never succeed. Others will never fail, despite the obstacles. To expect that all men will be equal in this sense (i.e., subjectively equal) is folly.

In the field of economics and in society, the objective equality of man must be acknowledged, but his subjective inequality must also be recognized and provided for. The Fabian plans to erase the abuses of society by making all men subjectively equal or identical. Any system established on such an unnatural basis is erroneous in concept and pernicious in effect.

CONCLUSION

If England is to be rescued from economic ruin, its salvation will have to come from a source other than the Fabian. It will have to come from one who understands the nature of man, his universal, fundamental, God-given rights and his individual, personal, characteristic propensities. Provision must be made for both. He will have to recognize the limited extent to which social services can be put, beyond which margin they become harmful. He must realize the impracticality of nationalization, the value of professional success, the basic role of the profit-motive, the economic propulsiveness of competition. In short, he will have to appreciate and understand all the basic rights and tendencies of man which the Fabian has managed so helplessly to confuse.

The Fabian emblem is the turtle. His motto: "When I strike, I strike hard." His goal: absolute equality. The turtle has no teeth, is proverbially slow, has a hard shell. All are characteristics of the Fabian.

The Fabian hard shell of Socialism will keep him immune from the stinging and prodding of a protesting populace; he lives within

a world of phantasy where Socialism is the savior of mankind. Because of this socialistic confinement, he will be ineffectual to establish any practical, workable and progressive economy for his nation; his policies will have no teeth. And he will move slowly forward with that inevitable pace of gradualness either to absolute dissolution or to Communism.

EDWARD J. MCMAHON, S.J.

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FIFTY YEARS AGO

The leading article in *The American Ecclesiastical Review* for August, 1905, contributed by Fr. A. F. Truyols, S.J., of St. Beuno's College, North Wales, is entitled "Historical and Dogmatic Sense in Scripture." The author defines the historical sense of a biblical text as "that which is immediately contained in the words of Scripture and is expressed by them." The dogmatic sense is that which has been declared by the Church. Father Truyols believes that the dogmatic sense can never be different from the historical sense; and from this standpoint he takes exception to the views enunciated by Loisy in *Autour d'un petit livre* (condemned by the Church in 1903). . . . Fr. H. Borgmann, C.SS.R., contributes an interesting article on "Church Bells." He tells us that bells cast in mould were first used by the Irish monks of the fifth century. He also describes the various uses of bells in ecclesiastical practice, such as the Angelus, the Death Peal, the Sacring Bell, etc. . . . The first instalment of a novel entitled "The Training of a Wealthy Parishioner," by Fr. E. J. Devine, S.J., is also contained in this issue. . . . Fr. P. Forde, of Ireland, concludes his series on the Protestant philosopher, Berkeley. . . . Fr. J. Ferreres, S.J., explains his opinion (now commonly accepted) that the soul can remain in the body for a considerable period of time after all signs of life have ceased. He promises in a later article to apply this doctrine to the baptism of infants apparently dead at birth. . . . In the Studies and Conferences we find a photostat copy of a letter, written in 1857 by Bishop Neumann of Philadelphia to Bishop Lefevre of Detroit, in which the saintly prelate highly praises the project of opening an American college at Louvain, and also states that he is desirous of being transferred from Philadelphia to a smaller see. . . . This section also lists the days on which Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament may be given in churches in the United States without special permission from the local Ordinary.

F. J. C.

THE CANTICLE OF CANTICLES IN THE CONFRATERNITY VERSION

It is hardly an exaggeration to say that the average Bible reader gives up on the Canticle of Canticles. There are so many other Biblical books that seem more important and more pertinent, and certainly less mysterious.[1] Or, if the Canticle must be read (and its use in the liturgy is quite frequent), it has to be allegorized to death. But allegory does not consist in seizing upon scattered verses and applying them along pious lines, as for example: "there is no blemish in you," applied to the Blessed Virgin. Allegory, where it is not merely a riotous imagination at work, is a difficult feat. Perhaps the best proof of this is the learned allegorical interpretation recently advanced by two French Catholic scholars, A. Robert and A. Feuillet.[2] A minute acquaintance with the rest of the Bible is necessary to follow the development of the allegory which they propose. By the same token, this artificially causes their interpretation to fall of its own weight. Is there a way of reading the Canticle that avoids allegory, whether arbitrary or heavy handed, and at the same time is sufficiently spontaneous and inspirational to challenge the average Bible reader? The new translation of the Canticle in the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine version provides a start in this direction. The text is accompanied by marginal notations (B, G, D) indicating that the lines are spoken by the Bride, Groom, or the Daughters of Jerusalem.[3] Moreover, the frequent headings, analogous to the blocked headings found in the prose books of the first CCD volume, *Genesis to Ruth,* are designed to keep the central ideas and key develop-

[1] A more sober judgment, however, will concur in the statement about the Canticle attributed to Rabbi Aqiba in the Mishnah: "the world itself is not worth the day on which this book was given to Israel."

[2] For a statement and criticism of this allegorical position, cf. R. E. Murphy, "Recent Literature on the Canticle of Canticles," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly,* 16 (1954), 1-11.

[3] This practice is as old as the Codex *Sinaiticus;* one cannot expect complete agreement on the allotment of lines, or even on the *dramatis personae;* but this is not the place to defend the alignment of these marginal notations; cf. the writer's article, "The Structure of the Canticle of Canticles," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly,* 16 (1949), 381-391.

ments before the reader. Perhaps they sin by defect, but this is better than if they were committed to a definitive (e.g., the allegorical) interpretation which would thus come between the reader and the text. The rest of this article offers a brief explanation of the dialogue in the Canticle, based on the CCD translation: just what does the Bride say to the Groom, and *vice versa?* Then an over-all view of the Canticle will be discussed: what point is the divinely inspired author making?

THE COURSE OF THE DIALOGUE

Love's Desires (1:2-4) strikes a note that runs throughout the entire poem: a desire for union with the Groom. At the very beginning there is evidenced a certain tension between the Bride and the Daughters. There is really no equality between them; the Bride alone is the beloved. Yet, they too, recognize the charm of the Groom and seek his company (cf. 6:1). The Bride pays him a compliment that is typical of the highly figurative language in the Canticle:

> More delightful is your love than wine!
> Your name spoken is a spreading perfume— (1:2-3)

In this poem the Groom's love is foremost; every other value, symbolized by the wine, is secondary.

Love's Boast (1:5-6) is a defense of the girl's beauty; she is beautiful despite a swarthiness which she attributes to exposure to the sun as she worked in the vineyards. There is a clever play on "vineyard," which is a key word in the rest of the Canticle. If her brothers aimed to seclude her (8:8-9) by assigning her to work, she nevertheless has lost her heart to her lover:

> My own vineyard I have not cared for. (1:6)

Love's Inquiry (1:7-8) marks a definite motif or theme in the poem: the search. This is an artful means of emphasizing her desire to be with her lover; instead of a repetition of flat statements that would soon lose their flavor, the author has cleverly worked in situations that highlight the search motif, as here and also in 3:1-5 and 5:2-8. It also allows the introduction of a new metaphor for the Groom. In v. 4 he was termed a king (an echo to this is found in the "Solomon" passage, 3:6-11); now he is a

shepherd.[4] Because of the author's predilection for rustic themes, it is this aspect of the lover that characterizes him throughout the poem. He is one who lives close to nature, as one expects of a shepherd.

Love's Vision (1:9-11) is a momentary glance at the beloved, which describes her ornament rather than her person. She is decked out in spangles such as one sees on royal chariotry.

Love's Union (1:12-2:7) begins with the Bride's description of her lover as a precious perfume and spices which cling to her. In their rural trysting place the lovers exchange compliments and she delicately describes her feeling for him. He is incomparable among men and his gentle embrace makes her swoon. The adjuration to the Daughters of Jerusalem, many times repeated (3:5; 8:4), seems to say that love is no artificial thing. As indicated above, there is a certain tension between the Bride and the Daughters; she gives them to understand that they cannot hope to awaken in her lover any interest. His love belongs entirely to her and cannot be diverted elsewhere.

A Tryst in the Spring (2:8-17) is perhaps the most beautiful section in our poem on account of its vivid imagery and depth of feeling. The beloved pictures her lover speeding over the mountains to visit her, describes the impatient fumbling at the lattice to see if she is at home. Then there is the superb invitation:

> Arise, my beloved, my beautiful one,
> and come!
> For see, the winter is past,
> the rains are over and gone.
> The flowers appear on the earth,
> the time of pruning the vines has come,
> and the song of the dove is heard in our land.
> The fig tree puts forth its figs,
> and the vines, in bloom, give forth fragrance.
> Arise, my beloved, my beautiful one,
> and come! (2:10-13)

As he catches a glimpse of her in her mountain home, he compares her to a dove whose song reveals its presence on a hilly fastness; let her sing, too. She replies with an enigmatic little ditty

[4] It is well known that the modern Syrian wedding ceremonies portray the married couple as king and queen.

about the foxes that damage the blossoming vineyards. Her reply defies certain analysis; it may have been part of a popular proverb or song. But the mention of vineyards is deliberate and revealing. Even while the line offers no evident meaning of itself, it stands as a reply to "let me hear your voice," and echoes the symbol of the vineyard which we have already been introduced to. One recognizes the fragile texture of these love situations within the poem. We are constantly presented with snatches of conversation, constantly changing from one scene to another (banquet-hall, shepherd's camps, cypresses, mountains) in the make-believe world of love that the poet is describing.[5] This moving scene ends with her proud affirmation of their mutual devotion and an invitation to him to spend the day with her, enjoying her company.

Loss and Discovery (3:1-5) is an instance of the search motif. The author has chosen this method in order to bring out their mutual love. Absence makes lovers unhappy, but when there is added to this the inability to find one's beloved, the suffering is intense. The Bride relates how one night she was compelled to see him—in vain. Hurried, futile questions! Perhaps the city watchmen have seen him? Finally she finds him, never to let him go till she brings him to her mother's home. The repetition of 2:7 in 3:5 is a refrain which is in situation here in so far as it stresses to the Daughters once more that he belongs to her, although she seemed to have lost him.

Regal State of the Bridegroom (3:6-11). Again, there is an abrupt change of locale, and the shepherd is, once more, a king. His approach is likened to a desert caravan: he comes with precious spices, accompanied by the imposing royal guard. His beautiful palanquin catches the eye of the women and the Daughters are urged to view the joyous sight. It is difficult to determine precisely the speaker of these lines. In the CCD version this text is attributed to the Daughters, but it must be admitted that there is also good reason to ascribe it to the Bride. The acclaim of "Solomon" is not unlike the detailed praises given to the lover in the rest of the Canticle, and the address to the Daughters in v. 11

[5] We say "make-believe," not to rule out actual scenes that the author may have experienced or witnessed, but to indicate that he has transformed them in his poetical treatment and has actually introduced a bewildering variety of them.

reminds one of 1:3-4 which mentions the admiration and love which other women have for him.

The Charms of the Beloved (4:1-11) is the first of the Groom's fairly lengthy descriptions of the beauty of the Bride. From commentators on all sides one receives cautions; that Oriental descriptions are apt, even if quite different from our taste. That is quite true, but it should be also said that we are perhaps more literal-minded about our metaphors. We literally see "a flock of goats streaming down the mountains of Galand," and we remain without any reaction (though it is a scene that gladdens the heart of a shepherd and it has its own charm for anyone who has glimpsed such idyllic scenes in Palestine). Again, the western mind may find it difficult to see the point in comparing a neck to David's tower, decorated with a thousand shields. But the Oriental has in mind his *reaction* to that sight; the nobility of carriage, if not the maiden's personal adornment, is thus the point of comparison. Such a description of the physical appearance of a girl is frequent in Semitic literature, and this literary type is still found in Palestinian folk songs today, where it is technically called a *waṣf*, from the Arabic word meaning "to describe." It should be pointed out here that this *waṣf*, as well as others within the poem, is essentially a chaste and reverent description. The statements about the various parts of the body are not in bad taste in Semitic culture. The extreme erotic allusions and interpretations that have been construed by some modern scholars are the result of unhealthy critical judgment and a lack of insight on an artistic level. The *waṣf* closes with a significant allusion to the invitation which the Bride has already issued to the Groom (cf. 4:6 with 2:17). Such allusions and interlockings go to show that the author intended the Canticle as a single poem, even though he has incorporated several practices from the wedding *mores* of his own day, and despite the fact that he switches from one scene to another without any transition.

The invitation (4:8-11) to the Bride to come from Lebanon is an outstanding example of sudden change. There is no logic to these switches in locale; in fact, they suggest that the author is incorporating some extraneous material into his work. At any rate, the effect is excellent; we are again in the mood of the mountains and hills of 2:8-17:

Come from Lebanon, my bride,
come from Lebanon, come!
Descend from the top of Amana,
from the top of Sanir and Hermon,
From the haunts of lions,
from the leopards' mountains.
You have ravished my heart, my sister, my bride;
you have ravished my heart with one glance of your eyes,
with one bead of your necklace.
How beautiful is your love, my sister, my bride,
how much more delightful is your love than wine,
and the fragrance of your ointments than all spices!
(4:8-10)

The ardor of his love matches hers and he returns the complimentary comparison that she used of him in 1:2.

The Lover and His Garden (4:12-5:1). The Groom's description of his Bride stresses first her inviolability and faithfulness: an enclosed garden, a fountain sealed. Then he develops the metaphors of garden and (ever-present in an Oriental garden) fountain: choice fruits and spices, and fresh water such as one gets from the cool snowy heights of Lebanon. Here is a dear possession he may well be proud of; may her charms captivate all. With a delicate allusion to her gift of herself to him, she invites him into *his* garden to partake of its offerings. His possession of her is affirmed in 5:1 and also acclaimed by the bystanders.

A Fruitless Search (5:2-8) is a companion piece to 3:1-5, using the "search" motif. Again, there is the lover's visit and his call to open; this time she fails to open quickly enough and he has already departed. The girl's reply to her lover's request sounds most strange:

I have taken off my robe,
am I then to put it on?
I have bathed my feet,
am I then to soil them? (5:3)

But in the context it is clear that her devotion to him has not diminished; in the very next verse she is trembling joyfully in anticipation of her lover. The "irrationality" of her reply in v. 3 must be attributed to her high emotion at the time. It is psychologically plausible that a person under emotional stress can be be-

fuddled by a course of action which in a calm state would present no obstacle. The search begins when she discovers his departure, but this time she is beaten by the city watchmen (the significance of this detail is hard to appraise). Finally, she has recourse to the Daughters to find her lover. They are to inform him that she is faint with love. It should be emphasized that this is, once more, a love-situation, artfully contrived. The sole purpose for appealing to the Daughters is to create movement within the poem and to give the Daughters their cue to ask for a description of the lover, as is related in the next unit.

The Charms of the Lost Lover (5:9-16) is far from being a description suitable for a Missing Persons' bureau. The sole *raison d'être* of the question asked by the Daughters is to provide an opportunity for the Bride to praise her lover's beauty. As we have already noted concerning such descriptions, the taste is Oriental; the main parts of the body are mentioned and briefly described (in terms of the Jerusalem temple?).

Discovery (6:1-3). It now becomes apparent that the lover was not really lost. The whole episode is part of the make-believe of the artist's world. The question of the Daughters amounts to a claim they make for him. They too will assist in the search; where has he gone? The question may seem foolish after the Bride has just asked them. But the point of the question is not the actual location of the hero, but the interest in him which has been awakened in the hearts of the Daughters; they are ready to join in the search. The Bride's answer is a startling one:

> My lover has come down to his garden,
> to the beds of spice,
> To browse in the garden
> and to gather lilies.
> My beloved belongs to me and I to him:
> he browses among the lilies. (6:2-3)

In other words, he was never really lost; he was and remains hers. The whole situation of loss and discovery is a device leading up to the affirmation of the Groom's fidelity to his Bride.

The Charms of the Beloved (6:4-10) are related in a *waṣf* that uses many of the same metaphors in the previous description. The comparison to Thirsa (6:4), the early capital of the Northern Kingdom, is perhaps a play on the word which seems to be derived

from the Hebrew root meaning "pleasing." As the Bride once pronounced him unique among men, he now returns the compliment: "One alone is my dove, my perfect one." And this is proved by the fact that all women sing her praises:

> Who is this that comes forth like the dawn,
> as beautiful as the moon, as resplendent as the sun,
> as awe-inspiring as bannered troops? (6:10)

Love's Meeting (6:11-12) is the gist of two verses that are among the most difficult in the book; verse 12 is textually uncertain and the whole constitutes an unusually abrupt transition from the preceding context. It seems to describe another rural scene when a great transformation was effected in the Bride; it was because of something that occurred in relation to her lover (the first inkling that her affection was returned?) that she recognized herself as "the blessed one of my kinswomen."

The Beauty of the Bride (7:1-6) is introduced by a summons to dance, issued by the Daughters to the "Sulamite," i.e., the Bride. One is tempted to understand the term Sulamite as an artificial name, parallel to the name Solomon which is used of the Groom; but it may also be related to the town of Sunem in the plain of Esdrelon. The coy reply of the girl to the Daughters' invitation indicates that she does not want to make herself a spectacle. Thereupon the Daughters launch into a description that is notably different from those uttered by the Groom. Whereas the other descriptions started from the head down, this one begins with the feet. Moreover, it emphasizes, in metaphors that are not precise to us, the fertility that is wished for the Bride (v. 3).

Love's Desires (7:7-10), uttered by the Groom, matches the opening verses of the Canticle which were spoken by his beloved. The lover expresses admiration and desire for union with her in the symbol of the vine cluster, and his final word is turned into a protestation of loyalty and devotion by the Bride who interrupts him (v. 10).

Love's Union (7:11-8:4) begins with an invitation by the Bride to retire to the country:

> Let us go early to the vineyards, and see
> if the vines are in bloom,
> If the buds have opened,
> if the pomegranates have blossomed;
> There will I give you my love. (7:13)

In 8:1 ff. she expresses a new desire: if only he were her brother, they might manifest their mutual affection even in public, without any fear of taunt. He could be a member of her own household, enjoying her presence continually. The scene closes exactly like the previous section of the same title (1:12-2:7).

Homecoming (8:5) is the title of a single verse in which the Daughters hail the approach of the couple, while the Groom recalls the first trysting-place: at home.

True Love (8:6-7) has never been better described than in these lines:

> Set me as a seal on your heart,
> as a seal on your arm;
> For stern as death is love,
> relentless as the nether world is devotion;
> its flames are a blazing fire.
> Deep waters cannot quench love,
> nor floods sweep it away.
> Were one to offer all he owns to purchase love,
> he would be roundly mocked. (8:6-7)

The seal, worn as it was around the neck or on the finger, aptly expresses her affection; its use for signatures and identification shows that it is a symbol for the person. The comparison between love and death emphasizes the relentless pursuit of each for its proper object. Nothing staves off death; neither can love be defeated by the greatest obstacles.

Chastity and Its Welcome (8:8-10) begins with the Bride quoting her brother's words about her. Once they had put her to work in the vineyards (1:6) as a seemingly protective measure. They are concerned about her youth and her marriage prospects; she needs to be protected. They will test her: if she is of easy virtue (a door) they shall guard her doggedly; but if she is virtuous (a wall), they will reward her. Her proud answer to this is that she is a wall; she has been chaste and this has made her welcome to her lover.

The Bride and Her Dowry (8:11-12) is widely regarded, along with the final verses of chapter eight, as an addition to the Canticle; it is certainly difficult to understand. The heading suggests that a dowry is in question here. The Groom, referred to once more as "Solomon," is said to possess a most valuable vineyard,

valued at a thousand silver pieces. Then the Bride refers to her own vineyard which is at her own disposal. As we have noted before, the vineyard is a symbol for herself. Her own vineyard seems to be the same as Solomon's which was given over to the caretakers (her brothers). She now proclaims that this vineyard belongs to Solomon, with a thousand pieces for dowry that she is bringing him, and there is a settlement of two hundred pieces for her brothers.

Life Together (8:13-14) is an unusual ending, yet it is somehow characteristic of the sudden movement throughout the Canticle. The Groom asks to hear her voice, as he did once before (2:14 f.), and she replies with a phrase that she has used before when she invited him to stay with her (2:17).[6]

THE INTERPRETATION

Thus far we have considered the immediate and direct meaning of the dialogue that we find the Canticle to be; the problem was to determine the drift of the dialogue. The larger question is: what is the meaning of the poem as a whole?[7] The Christian

[6] In this brief analysis we have limited ourselves to the essential ideas expressed in the dialogue. Much more could be said about the poetic imagery that is peculiar to the Canticle. There is a deliberate choice of symbols within the poem itself: mountains and trees; apples, mandrakes and pomegranates; gardens and lilies; doves, gazelles and hinds; palms and vineyards. The use of such symbols is undoubtedly to be traced to the customs of the author's own day and the problem of their origin is an exceedingly complex one. For a treatment of these symbols within the context of the canticle, see D. Buzy, "Un chef-d'oeuvre de poésie pure: le Cantique des Cantiques," *Memorial Lagrange* (Paris: Gabalda, 1940), 147-162. These symbols are to be found in modern Palestinian as well as in ancient Oriental poetry; for the latest treatment of this point, as well as references to earlier literature, see H. Ringgren, "Die Volksdichtung und das Hohe Lied," in *Uppsala Universitets Arsskrift,* 1952:5. Ringgren's conclusions are more than the evidence warrants. The influence of the Canticle upon later Palestinian poetry is not even considered. Moreover, the very universality of the language of love renders it extremely difficult to draw conclusions that point out the direction of influence in Oriental literature.

[7] This is not the place to argue for the essential unity of the Canticle. One may well grant that several poems have gone into the final composition. But the use of refrains and repetitions show that the author and compiler had a unifying idea: the description of love. The situation is not as desperate as one Scripture professor half-humorously described it: it is as if one were to reach into a piano bench and come up with a group of songs that have been published together.

(and Jewish) interpretation has consistently favored a higher meaning: the poem describes the relationship between God and His People in terms of human love. The arguments in favor of this view are the weight of the long standing traditional interpretation (*melior est conditio possidentis*) and the presence of the marriage theme (symbolizing God and His People) in the prophetic literature.[8] This higher meaning takes two forms, in so far as the Canticle is viewed as a strict allegory or as a parable. If the poem is taken as an allegory depicting the relationship between Yahweh and Israel, each detail is given a higher meaning. As we have already mentioned, Robert and Feuillet are the most recent exponents of this view. On the other hand, if the poem is a parable, the details have no special transferred meaning. They are introduced merely to bring out the main idea: the love of God for His People (the Chosen People of the New Testament, which is the Church, the Spouse of Christ). From this point of view, the author has developed an idea which is neatly formulated by Isaias:

> For as a young man marries a maiden,
> so shall your Builder marry you;
> Your God shall rejoice over you
> with the joy of a bridegroom in a bride. (62:5)

There is a more solid basis for interpreting the poem as a parable rather than as an allegory.

Recently, two noted Catholic scholars have written in favor of understanding the Canticle as a divinely inspired treatment of the sacredness of love between husband and wife.[9] In the literal sense the poem describes human love. Accordingly, the divine purpose in inspiring such a work would be to inculcate that the love He has created in mankind is a sacred thing, and fidelity its prime characteristic. There is a great deal to be said in favor of this interpretation. There can be no objection against it from the

[8] See, for example, the treatment by D. Buzy, "L'allégorie matrimoniale de Jahvé et d'Israël et le Cantique des Cantiques," *Vivre et Penser,* III Série (1943/4), I, 77-90.

[9] A. Dubarle, "L'amour humain dans le Cantique des Cantiques," *Revue Biblique,* 61 (1954), 67-86.

M. van den Oudenrijn, "Vom Sinne des Hohen Liedes," *Divus Thomas* (Friburg), 31 (1953), 257-280.

point of view of inspiration; such a topic is surely worthy of divine authorship because "male and female he created them." Indeed, one could point to various passages in the Bible which exemplify this theme (e.g., *Prov.* 5 and 6). Moreover, this seems to be the more obvious meaning of the poem and is, therefore, in line with the directive of Leo XIII that one should not depart from the obvious sense except for a reason of necessity. Both scholars allow of a higher meaning; Dubarle indicates that this description of faithful and happy human love points to similar characteristics of divine love; van den Oudenrijn, more emphatically, sees divine love as the anti-type and the basis for the typical sense is the revelation contained in *Ephesians* 5:23 ff.

It is to be hoped that the defeatist attitude toward the Canticle, indicated at the beginning of this article, will be dispelled by the new translation of the poem in the CCD version, and that even the briefest exegesis as this article offers will suggest to Catholic readers the true riches of a divinely inspired poem.

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MARY'S HOLINESS IN NEW TESTAMENT APOCRYPHA

The purpose of this article is to furnish in outline form the theme of the holiness of Mary in the New Testament Apocrypha. The present paper will serve as an introduction to a later study which will treat this theme in full detail.

The source of our investigation will be the New Testament Apocrypha. Besides the canonical New Testament, there grew up a type of literature known as the Apocryphal New Testament writings. These writings strive to supply data regarding Christ, Mary, the Apostles and the future life. Thus there developed such writings as apocryphal Gospels, Epistles, Acts, and Apocalypses. In supplying for the silence of the canonical writings on these various points, the writers give free sway to their imaginations, write in a fantastic manner, and surcharge their accounts with home-made miracles. To gain readers and to bolster up their accounts, the writers pose as Apostles or as people closely associated with the Apostles. Aside from the fact that these writings are not inspired, it has been said that these works, by their bizarre style, have not been excluded, but have excluded themselves from the New Testament.[1] Stylistically, there is no comparison between the majesty and simplicity of the canonical writings and the extravagance and bombast of the apocryphal writings. Furthermore, these writings were often used by heretics, especially the Gnostics, as mouthpieces for their propaganda.[2]

Despite these strictures, these writings are of tremendous importance. They furnish an insight into the early Christian mentality. They are witnesses to Christian beliefs and practices. Hence, they are a great help for the theologians and the history of dogma. If this is true for theology in general, it is particularly true of Mariology. These works are written by defenders of Mary's privileges and champions of Mary's greatness. In the field of Mariology, the authors for the most part are orthodox, and even if a work has its origin from a church in schism, e.g. Egypt,

[1] James, M., *The Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford, 1926), p. xii.

[2] Cf. Amann, E., *"Apocryphes du nouveau testament,"* in *Dictionnaire de la bible,* supplément, I (Paris, 1928), 460-533.

it must be borne in mind that these people vied with the orthodox in proclaiming the greatness of the Mother of God.[3]

In this apocryphal literature, there are two main Marian sources. The first, from about the middle of the second century, is the *Protoevangelium* of James. Closely allied with this are the Syriac, Ethiopic, Armenian and Latin translations or elaborations, the various Infancy Gosepls, the *History of Joseph the Carpenter,* and the *Coptic Lives of the Virgin.*[4] The second source, from the end of the fifth century, is the literature known as the *Transitus Mariae.* Included in this are the various versions in Syriac, Coptic, Greek, Latin, etc.[5]

In this literature there is a whole corpus of Mariology, comprising testimonies to Mary's virginity, maternity, Assumption, queenship and intercession.[6] Obviously, all these aspects of Mariology are testimonies to her holiness. Nevertheless, there are sufficient testimonies in this literature to Mary's holiness to warrant the writing of a special treatise on this aspect of Mariology. A preliminary word of caution is called for. Modern treatises of Mariology have their logical and schematic divisions regarding Mary's sanctity. In this literature, as is to be expected, there is no such orderly codification. To these authors, Mary is the holy Virgin, the all-holy Mother of God. She is simply holy. Incidentally, the phrase, "the holy Virgin," is an appellation containing an idea of sanctity which does not begin only with the day of the Annunciation, an appellation which obviously comprises more than mere virginity or physical integrity.[7] These simple

[3] On the value of the Apocrypha, cf. James, M., *op. cit.,* pp. xii f.; Jugie, M., A. A., *"La mort et l'assomption de la sainte Vierge"* in *Studi e Testi,* CXIV (Città del Vaticano, 1944), 167 ff.

[4] Amann, E., *Le protoévangile de Jacques et ses remaniéments latins* (Paris, 1910).

[5] Balic, C., O.F.M., *"Testimonia de assumptione B. V. Mariae ex omnibus saeculis"* in *Bibliotheca assumptionis B. V. M.,* I (Rome, 1948), 14-65, 137-58; Jugie, M., *op. cit.,* 103-71; Rush, A. C., C.SS.R., "Assumption Theology in the Transitus Mariae" in *AER,* CXXIII, 2 (Aug. 1950), 93-110.

[6] A study on Mary in the Apocrypha of the New Testament, written by the present writer, appears in the first volume of *Mariology,* edited by J. Carol, O.F.M. (Milwaukee, 1955).

[7] Le Bachelet, X., *"Immaculée Conception"* in *DTC,* VII-I (Paris, 1927), 875.

statements of holiness are the basis for many other assertions regarding the sanctity of Mary.

The principal aim of the author of the *Protoevangelium* was to defend the virginity of Mary against current attacks. Voicing traditional teaching, he shows that Mary was a virgin *ante partum, in partu,* and *post partum.*[8] In defending Mary's virginity, however, he ascribes to Mary what might be described as a legal or physical purity and holiness. She is considered above all as a physical agent or the Incarnation. Her role is that of furnishing a body for the Incarnate Word, and since this body had to be without defilement, there was attributed to Mary a purity that is, above all, exterior. Little account is taken of moral dispositions; no stress is laid on the voluntary intervention of Mary in all this work. Thus, she could not be defiled by stepping on the ground. Instead of offering herself to God, she was rather offered to Him; instead of vowing herself to God, she was vowed to Him.[9] There is, however, a phrase in the *Protoevangelium* of James that shows how the quality of holiness is linked to the person of Mary. When Anna thanked God for working a miracle by giving offspring to her and Joachim, who were advanced in age and sterile, she exclaimed: "And the Lord has given me a fruit of His justice."[10] Commenting on this, M. Jugie remarks: "This fruit of justice which the Lord gave her, does it not designate Mary?" Mary is called a fruit of justice, that is, a fruit of holiness, worthy of Him who gave it.[11] Mary, the fruit of holiness given to Joachim and Anna, is one who in the words of the angel will be spoken of in the entire world.[12]

Eloquent as is the defense of Mary's perfect virginity in the *Protoevangelium* of James, the author emphasizes a holiness in Mary that is legal, physical and exterior. Consequently, in other elaborations of the *Protoevangelium,* while the virginity of Mary

[8] Amann, E., *Le protoévangile,* etc., pp. 22-39. Regarding the attacks on Mary's virginity, cf. Origines, *Contra Celsum,* I, 32.

[9] Amann, E., *op. cit.,* pp. 23-29.

[10] *Protoevangelium Jacobi,* VI, 3 (Amann, *op. cit.,* pp. 202). The text is also found in Tischendorf, C., *Evangelia apocrypha* (Leipzig, 1876), pp. 1-50; Michel, C., *"Evangiles apocryphes"* in *Textes et documents,* XII (Paris, 1911), 2-50.

[11] Jugie, M., *"Le protoévangile de Jacques et l'Immaculé Conception"* in *Echos d'Orient,* XIV (1911), 20.

[12] *Protoevangelium Jacobi,* IV, 1 (Amann, *op. cit.,* p. 192).

is defended, there is great stress laid on Mary's voluntary co-operation in the work of holiness. This is particularly strong in the sixth-century Latin work of Pseudo-Matthew, entitled, *Liber de ortu beatae Mariae et infantia Salvatoris.* In this, Mary of her own free will and as a means of being dear to God, vows herself to God by perpetual virginity.[13] Furthermore, describing Mary's life in the temple, the author pictures her as a model of prayer and industry. She surpassed all in prayer, wisdom, charity, humility, and all virtues.[14] This change of emphasis is easy to understand. It reflects the *praedicatio catholica* which proclaimed Mary as the model of Christian asceticism, the originator and protector of consecrated virginity.[15]

Describing Mary's life in the temple, Pseudo-Matthew pictures Mary as living in a convent of virgins, conceived after the manner of Christian convents. In the *Coptic Lives of the Virgin* and the sermon of Theodosius of Alexandria on the Assumption, Mary is portrayed as the Superioress of a group of virgins with whom she lived after the Ascension of Christ into Heaven;[16] and whom she trained in the ways of purity and holiness. This convent theme is of paramount importance for understanding the holiness ascribed to Mary in the Apocrypha. The Christian ascetic was regarded as the acme of Christian spirituality. What the martyr was in the era of persecution, the monk was in the succeeding era of peace. The ascetic was the perfect imitator of Christ, the brother to the martyr; such a life was a spiritual martyrdom, in fact a daily martyrdom. Such a life was a white martyrdom in contrast to red martyrdom.[17] Such a portrayal of Mary, therefore, is an

[13] Pseudo-Matthaeus, *Liber de ortu Mariae et infantia Salvatoris,* VII (Amann, *op. cit.,* pp. 300-304). The text is also found in Tischendorf, C., *op. cit.,* pp. 51-112; Michel, C., *op. cit.,* pp. 54-158.

[14] Pseudo-Matthaeus, *Liber de ortu Mariae,* VI (Amann, *op. cit.,* pp. 296-300).

[15] Amann, E., *op. cit.,* p. 28; Dublanchy, E., *"Marie: Le voue de virginité émis par Marie"* in *DTC,* IX-II (Paris, 1927), 2386. Pius XII, *Sacra virginitas* in *AAS,* XXXVI (1954), 187-189.

[16] *Sahidic Fragments of the Life of the Virgin,* IV, 23 (ed. Robinson, J., *Coptic Apocryphal Gospels* in *Texts and Studies,* IV, 2 [Cambridge, 1896], 29); Theodosius Alexandrinus, *The Falling Asleep of Mary,* II, 1 (ed. Robinson, J., *op. cit.,* 93).

[17] Malone, E., O.S.B., *The Monk and the Martyr* (Washington, D. C.: The Catholic University of America, *Studies in Christian Antiquity,* XII, 1950).

indication that to these authors Mary was a model of holiness and a paragon of Christian perfection. In a word, the holiness of Mary in this first source from the apocryphal New Testament is summed up in the Arabic Gospel of the Infancy which proclaims that Mary the Mother of God has no equal.[18]

To proclaim the glories of the Mother of God is also to proclaim the holiness of Mary. This explains why there is such a pronounced emphasis on this theme in the literature known as the *Transitus Mariae* which deals with the death and glorification of Mary. Holiness is constantly ascribed to Mary. Whether these documents refer to her as Mary, Virgin, Mother or Queen, the word "holy" is always used. She is holy Mary, the holy virgin, the holy Mother of God and the holy Queen.

Some idea of the exaltedness and holiness of Mary is gained from these words of the complete Syriac version which is often referred to as the work of Pseudo-James: "For she was a vine of rejoicing, she who was chosen by God before all created things, and God sent His Son, and He was born of her without the intercourse of man. . . . She also the Lady Mary was holy and elect of God before she was born. . . . She is the holy woman, whose commemoration it befits us to make, the most blessed among women."[19]

The Latin account of Pseudo-Melito brings out the holiness of the Virgin Mother of Christ by noting that she was forechosen by Christ to be His immaculate dwelling place.[20] She who was chosen to be Christ's immaculate dwelling lived a life of personal holiness by loving God with her whole heart and by keeping the treasure that was committed to her. Such was her holiness in life that when her soul left the body it shone with a whiteness that no tongue of man can describe. Its whiteness was greater than that of snow, and its resplendent brilliance was greater than the sparkling of all metals and silver.[21]

[18] *Evangelium infantiae Salvatoris arabicum,* III (ed. Tischendorf, C., *op. cit.,* p. 182).

[19] Pseudo-Jacobus, *Transitus Mariae,* I (ed. Lewis, A., *Apocrypha syriaca,* in *Studia sinaitica,* XI [London, 1902], 15).

[20] Pseudo-Melito, *Transitus Mariae,* XV, 3 (ed. Tischendorf, C., *Apocalypses apocryphae,* etc. [Leipzig, 1866], p. 134).

[21] Pseudo-Melito, *op. cit.,* VII (*ed. cit.,* p. 129).

Pseudo-John, the author of the Greek version of the *Transitus Mariae,* can describe the holiness of Mary only by having recourse to the use of the superlative. To him, Mary is all holy. She is *παναγία.* This holiness of Mary is especially linked up with her role as Virgin-Mother. In his words she is "the all-holy glorious Mother of God and ever-virgin Mary."[22] Giving further precision to his thoughts, Pseudo-John speaks of Mary as the holy and spotless Mother of God and Virgin.[23]

Being a creature of holiness, Mary is holy in body and soul. The body of Mary, as the instrument of her virginity, divine maternity, and the practice of virtue and sanctity, is sacred and venerable. It is because of this that he asserts that the sacred and venerable body of Mary will not see corruption.[24] If the body is sacred and venerable, all the more so is the soul. The soul of the Virgin Mother of God, the soul of one who is all-holy and spotless is, after this life, ready for the Beatific Vision. Describing Mary's death, Pseudo-John writes: "And the Lord spread forth His unstained hands and received her holy and spotless soul."[25] Holiness in the life of grace is the prelude to beatitude in the life of glory. The unique holiness of Mary in body and soul was the preparation for her exceptional glorification in body and soul. Pseudo-John brings this out when he pictures Christ as saying to Mary: "Behold, henceforth shall thy precious body be translated unto paradise, and thy holy soul shall be in the heavens, in the treasuries of My Father in unsurpassing brightness."[26]

One of the most celebrated Coptic accounts of the *Transitus* is that written by Theodosius, the Jacobite patriarch of Alexandria, 535-66.[27] When speaking of Mary in her various functions as Virgin and Mother, he always speaks of her as holy. She is the "holy Godbearer Mary," the "holy Virgin Mary," and "Mary

[22] Pseudo-Ioannes, *Liber de dormitione Mariae,* 1 (ed. Tischendorf, C., *Apocalypses apocryphae,* etc., p. 95).

[23] Pseudo-Ioannes, *op. cit.,* 26 (*ed. cit.,* p. 103).

[24] Pseudo-Ioannes, *op. cit.,* 10 (*ed. cit.,* p. 98).

[25] Pseudo-Ioannes, *op. cit.,* 44 (*ed. cit.,* p. 109).

[26] Pseudo-Ioannes, *op. cit.,* 39 (*ed cit.,* p. 108).

[27] Amann, E., *"Théodose d'Alexandrie"* in *DTC,* XIV-I (Paris, 1946), 325-328.

the holy Virgin."[28] Theodosius brings out that Mary's holiness is seen in carrying out the Lord's commandment of charity. He pictures Mary as addressing the Lord and referring to Him, in the words of the Canticle of Canticles, as Him whom my soul loves.[29] The holiness of Mary, rooted in the love of God, is also manifested in the performance of good works. When Christ presents the soul of Mary to the Heavenly Father, He speaks of His Mother as one who is adorned with good deeds.[30]

In the sermon of Theodosius the most glowing testimonies to Mary's holiness are found in his description of Mary's glorification. This is not surprising since holiness on earth is the basis of and prelude to glorification in heaven. Theodosius has two accounts of Mary's glorification. The first deals with the entrance of the soul of Mary into heavenly glory; the second deals with the raising up of the body of Mary and her heavenly glorification in both soul and body.[31]

When Christ had called Mary in death, He presented her to the court of heaven and said:

> O my good Father, receive from Me the soul of My blessed Mother, who received Thine only begotten Son in the world. Receive from Me Thy holy temple, which was a dwelling place of Thy Holy Spirit, even the unity of the Godhead. . . . I offer Thee, O My Father, a royal gift today, even the soul of My Virgin Mother. I bring in unto Thee today, O My good Father, her who is better than the ark of old; for Thou didst save the whole world by My being in her, Thy co-essential Son. Today is a day of joy to Me, O My Father, the Almighty; for My Mother comes to Thee, arrayed and adorned with good deeds. The angels rejoice with Me today, O My good Father, as they see Me rejoicing with My Virgin Mother, who comes to them arrayed in heavenly garments. The archangels sing Our praise today, O My good Father, singing the befitting song, Glory to God in the highest, and peace at the coming unto us of the Mother of our Lord.

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[28] Theodosius Alexandrinus, *The Falling Asleep of Mary,* Prologus, III, 3; III, 8 (ed. Robinson, J., *Coptic Apocryphal Gospels* in *Texts and Studies,* IV, 2 [Cambridge, 1896], 92, 99).

[29] Theodosius Alexandrinus, *op. cit.,* III, 9, 30; VI, 31 (*ed. cit.,* pp. 101, 103, 117).

[30] Theodosius Alexandrinus, *op. cit.,* VI, 20 (*ed. cit.,* p. 115). Cf. also IX, 15.

[31] Cf. Balic, C., *"Testimonia de assumptione . . . ,"* p. 44.

The Cherubim and the Seraphim give their doxology of praise for this day, saying, Holy, Holy, Holy art Thou, Lord, Sabbaoth; holy is Thy temple, Thy cherubic throne. Who shall see Me today rejoicing, O My good Father, and not rejoice with Me? For this is at once My temple and My Throne.[32]

In the Assumption scene, Theodosius portrays Christ as addressing the body of Mary, commanding it to rise from the dead. Then he speaks of Mary personally, glorified in body and soul. Mary's holiness in body and soul is seen in these words placed on the lips of Christ:

Arise from thy sleep, O thou holy body which was to Me a Temple: wear thy soul, which was to Me a true tent. Arise, O thou body, that dies according to its nature: wear thy deathless soul, that thou mayest be altogether deathless, and that I may take thee to the land of the living. . . . Arise. Why sleepest thou yet in the earth? Array thyself with thy soul and come to the heavens with Me, unto My good Father and the Holy Spirit; for they long for thee. . . . Arise, O thou holy body: be joined to the blessed soul. Receive from Me thy resurrection before the whole creation. The inhabitants of heaven will be amazed, when they see thee arrayed with thy soul, even with immortality. They will say one to another, Who is this that hath received resurrection before the whole creation? Peradventure this is the house of the Lord, this is the Gate of heaven. Let us sing praise to our God herein, for the Lord loves it more than all the dwellings of Jacob; which is the choir of the saints.[33]

In the foregoing lines, Theodosius brings out that Mary in her holiness and glory is greater than the choir of the saints. This idea is brought out with even greater emphasis and precision in the Coptic account of Pseudo-Evodius.[34] In his eulogy on Mary, the holy Virgin, whose holy virgin womb was made worthy to become a dwelling place of the Word of the Father, the author exclaims:

What is the honor wherewith I shall honor thee, O thou holy Virgin, O thou that shinest more than the sun and art better than the moon, O thou that art higher than the angels who have no body,

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[32] Theodosius Alexandrinus, *op. cit.*, VI, 14-26 (*ed. cit.*, pp. 113-15).

[33] Theodosius Alexandrinus, *op. cit.*, VIII, 10-20 (*ed. cit.*, pp. 121, 123).

[34] Cf. Balic, C., *"Testimonia de assumptione . . . ,"* p. 40.

O thou that are more beautiful than the Cherubim and the Seraphim and the Thrones and the Dominations? Verily, thou art more honorable than all the ranks of the heavens, O Mary thou Virgin.[35]

These words at once recall to mind the glowing tributes to Mary's holiness that will characterize Byzantine homilectical literature and which are exemplified in these words of St. Germanius which are now used in the office for the feast of the Immaculate Conception: "Ave, Maria, gratia plena, Sanctis sanctior, et caelis excelsior, et Cherubim gloriosior et Seraphim honorabilior, et super omnem creaturam venerabilior."[36]

As is evident, there are abundant testimonies to Mary's holiness in this literature. These documents are not treatises on Mary's holiness but works which defend her virginity and proclaim the glories of the divine maternity. Nevertheless, in doing this the writers cannot speak of Mary without eulogizing her for her holiness. To these authors Mary is a creature of unique holiness. They cannot find words to describe this adequately. To them, Mary is holy and spotless; she was holy before she was born. This holiness excludes sin; sinlessness is a characteristic of the Mother of God. In these documents there is no explicit statement of the Immaculate Conception. Nevertheless, one feels that the writers are groping to find words that will utterly exclude all sin from one so honored by God. The praises of Mary in this literature are similar to those in the writings of the Fathers who hand down a doctrine unanimously received in the Church and of which Pope Pius XII writes: "If these praises of the Blessed Virgin Mary be given the careful consideration they deserve, who will dare to doubt that she, who was purer than the angels and at all times pure, was at any moment, even for the briefest instant, not free from any stain of sin?"[37] This literature emphasizes a double aspect of Mary's holiness. There is the voluntary element, that is, Mary's voluntary co-operation in virginity and the divine maternity, loving God with her whole heart, and per-

[35] Pseudo-Evodius, *The Falling Asleep of Mary*, III, 5; IV, 1 (ed. Robinson, J., *Coptic Apocryphal Gospels* in *Texts and Studies*, IV, 2 [Cambridge, 1896], 46-47).

[36] Germanus, *In praesentationem SS. Deiparae*, I, 18 (*MPG*, XCVIII, 307).

[37] Pius XII, *Fulgens Corona* in *AAS*, XLV (1953), 579-80.

forming good works. There is also the functional element. Mary's divine maternity, for example, was of itself a grace contributing to her complete holiness. Also worthy of note is the insistence on the fact that the beauty of Mary's holiness surpasses the beauty of all created things. Finally, in these documents there are statements which form the basis for the later-developed speculative principle which asserts that the final holiness of Mary surpasses that of all the angels and saints combined.

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VON HÜGEL AND HIS SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

It is an elementary rule of Christian prudence that Catholics should be very careful in accepting or recommending a book of spiritual direction. By its very nature, such a book sets out to tell people what they should do in order to gain and to grow in the life of divine grace. If that guidance be faulty, then the people who take it seriously and follow it will inevitably be in danger of ruining their spiritual lives, of turning away from God's friendship instead of advancing in it. Obviously it is highly imprudent to disregard such a danger as far as one's own spiritual life is concerned. It is equally clear that it is both imprudent and uncharitable to subject others to that danger by leading them to imagine that what is objectively an unacceptable work of spiritual direction is something excellent or at least innocuous.

A good book of spiritual direction effectively and accurately explains what God Himself has revealed about the path men are to follow as they progress in His love. Its lessons are taken from the deposit of divine public revelation, the truths found in Holy Scripture and in divine apostolic tradition. Only the living *magisterium* of the Catholic Church is competent to propound these truths competently, correctly and authoritatively. Hence a good work of spiritual direction is necessarily a clear and faithful expression of what the ecclesiastical *magisterium* has taught and will always continue to teach about the soul's growth in the life of grace and charity. Books of this sort—and they are anything but rare—should be welcomed and enthusiastically praised.

Within the course of the last few months a book of spiritual direction, originally published in 1928, has been re-issued and offered to our American Catholic reading public. The book, the *Letters from Baron Friedrich von Hügel to a Niece,* carries with it an Introduction by the niece to whom the original letters were written, a Preface by Father Sheerin, one of the best-known Catholic writers in the United States, and a Foreword by Mr. Michael de la Bedoyère, the biographer of Von Hügel and long prominent as a Catholic editor in England. The Introduction by Gwendolen Plunket Greene was written for the original edition.

The Preface and the Foreword were prepared for this recent American edition. In describing this series of letters by Von Hügel, all of them make laudatory statements which might be considered somewhat extravagant even if Von Hügel's spiritual teaching were perfectly acceptable.

Thus, speaking of "my uncle," Mrs. Greene asserts that "out of all our doings and cares, our hopes and fears, and loves, he makes a little home where the Spirit of Christ can dwell, and where, united to God by prayer, our souls can live and expand."[1]

She continues in what is, if possible, an even more adulatory vein:

> He "preaches Jesus." And when he tells us of God his face is lit and illumined by some interior fire. He speaks like a prophet. He burns with his message—what he sees, he makes us see. As before some tremendous catastrophe, some sublime grief or love, we are drawn into an awe and a worship of God we can never escape or forget.
>
> When he speaks of Our Lord and his Church and the Saints, he reveals these for us. They emerge as realities—greater than any, obliterating all we have known.[2]

Mr. Michael de la Bedoyère is somewhat more modest in his Foreword to the volume. He merely claims that the Introduction and the letters themselves, taken together, "make a wonderful initiation into the spiritual secrets of one who has been described as 'the greatest religious thinker after Newman.' "[3] In that same Foreword, however, he designates Von Hügel as "the old saint." He tells us that "The old saint, for all his learning, always retained the personal simplicity of a child, and there was nothing he loved better than teaching and guiding children, who loved his funny stories and expressions, and were moved with wonder by his immense sincerity."[4]

Father Sheerin asserts that the *Letters to a Niece* were written during "the Baron's quiet years when the smoke of battle had

[1] *Letters from Baron Friedrich von Hügel to a Niece,* Edited with an Introduction by Gwendolen Greene, Preface by John B. Sheerin, C.S.P. (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1955), p. 14. This book will be designated as *Letters* in subsequent references.

[2] *Ibid.,* pp. 14 f.

[3] *Ibid.,* p. 11.

[4] *Ibid.*

cleared and he was living a humble life of dedication to Christ."[5] He believes that "the spiritual insights he had learned from his preceptor, Abbé Huvelin" were radiated to Mrs. Greene in these *Letters*.[6] Furthermore, he claims for this book an important value, not only in the field of spiritual direction, but also in the realm of apologetics.

In his greatest work, *The Mystical Element of Religion* (1909), Von Hügel had outlined an apologetic method for presenting the Catholic case to non-Catholics. It was a superb achievement but so profound as to render it unavailable to the ordinary reader. Thirty years of study and seven years of writing had gone into it, but the reasoning was so involved, the sentences so long and ponderous that few dared to wrestle with it.

"Letters to a Niece" is a picture of this apologetic in operation. In startling contrast to the earlier work, this is written in a graceful, almost delicate style, in simple and picturesque language. Addressing his "darling Gwen," the Baron adopts the psychological approach of the *Mystical Element*. Instead of starting with abstract proofs for the existence of God and historical arguments showing that Christ established an infallible teaching Church headed by Peter, he takes the human person as his point of departure.

He explains to his niece why *she* needs the Catholic faith for the full development of all her faculties. . . .[7]

Ultimately, Father Sheerin praises Von Hügel more than any of the others. He tells us: "Certainly it can be said that no man has written so luminously as Friedrich Von Hügel of the spiritual transfiguration that comes to a soul through the Mystical Body of Christ."[8]

Now, according to the evidence before us, Von Hügel did not write or speak about the spiritual transformation within the

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 3.

[6] *Ibid.*

[7] *Ibid.*, pp. 3 f. The study with which Father Sheerin compares Von Hügel's "apologetic" is definitely not the traditional Catholic *tractatus de revelatione*. A work of genuine Catholic apologetics does not start with an abstract proof of God's existence. It rather presupposes an adequate and scientifically accurate demonstration of this truth. The teaching about the establishment of the Church is generally placed in the *tractatus de ecclesia*. What Von Hügel wrote in his *Letters* and in his *Mystical Element of Religion* is in no way a substitute for the content of the traditional Catholic apologetics.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 8.

Mystical Body either very luminously or with any great degree of success. According to Mrs. Greene, he was quite well aware of the fact that many of the men and women whom he had influenced manifested the direction of that influence by ceasing to be fervent Catholics or even by abandoning the practice of the religion altogether.

> He told me often of people who had changed under his influence, and had become poor or even unpracticing Catholics—and how he felt himself to blame in having unsettled them, and given them what they were not ready for. This was the deepest grief to him: "When I think of these, and it is quite a long list, how I wish I had never talked to them!"[9]

The list was, in fact, rather long. It included, incidentally, a great many priests. Fathers Hébert, Loisy, Addis, Fawkes, Tyrrell, Mathew, and Buonaiuti, among others, were friends or close acquaintances of Von Hügel, and all of them suffered spiritual shipwreck. Anyone within the large circle of Von Hügel's friends and acquaintances was bound to come, in some degree at least, under his influence. The fate of these men is at least a questionable advertisement for the worth of Von Hügel's spiritual direction. As a matter of fact, there have been very few "spiritual directors" in the history of the Church whose influence accompanied, if it did not occasion, so many failures in Catholic life.

Father Sheerin mentions one failure on Von Hügel's part, and attempts to explain one of his characteristic attitudes in terms of a lesson learned from that failure.

> This puzzling reticence of Von Hügel, this renunciation of any ambition to make converts [to the Catholic Church], was probably the result of a sad personal experience. He had exerted pressure on his own daughter, Gertrude, in forming her religious views. He had strained and perplexed a sensitive soul with the result that she lost her faith completely for several years.[10]

This story, together with Mrs. Greene's claim that the spiritual benefits conferred by Von Hügel on individuals who thereby lost their enthusiasm for the faith or the faith itself were actually

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 47.

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 7.

teachings set before people who were not as yet prepared to receive them, can best be appreciated in the light of what Von Hügel himself has to say about this incident. In a letter to Tyrrell, whom he had called in to aid the daughter who had lost her faith, Von Hügel gives us some idea of the practical nature of his own influence on his daughter.

> I see so increasingly the triple fault and undermining character of my influence, the dwelling so constantly on the detailed humanities in the Church; the drawing out and giving full edge to religious difficulties; the making too much of little intellectual and temperamental differences between myself and most Catholics, near relations included, so as to seriously weaken such influence as they might otherwise have had.[11]

In other words, according to Von Hügel himself, his daughter lost her faith (she was later to recover it), in great measure at least, as a result of her own father's influence upon her. He had talked to her about "the detailed humanities in the Church," the imperfections, moral and intellectual, of the various Catholics who did not agree with him. He had forced difficulties against the religion upon her notice, without being either able or willing to resolve those difficulties. He had steadfastly minimized the influence which other Catholics, even her own relations, might have been able to exercise for good upon the unfortunate girl.

Rather than learning any particular lesson from this misadventure, incidentally, Von Hügel went ahead with the same policy which had originally brought about his daughter's loss of faith. Around and after the time of the first Roman condemnation of Loisy's books, De la Bedoyère tells us, Gertrud was in Rome, "helping the cause as and when she could."[12] The "cause," naturally, was that of Loisy and her father. Obviously she was assigned to this position by her father himself.

Gertrud von Hügel died in the Church. Other victims of her father's sinister spiritual direction were not so fortunate. Perhaps

[11] This letter is quoted in Michael de la Bedoyère's *The Life of Baron von Hügel* (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, Ltd., 1951), p. 101. This book will be designated as *Life* in subsequent references.

[12] Cf. *ibid.*, p. 161. Loisy tells of some of her activities in his *Mémoires pour servir a l'histoire religieuse de notre temps* (Paris: Nourry, 1931), II, 337, 355, 370, 375.

the outstanding tragedy caused by Von Hügel's inept spiritual guidance was that of the Jesuit, Father Tyrrell. He was called in by Von Hügel in 1897 to try to repair the damage done by Von Hügel to his daughter's faith. From that time until his death, in 1909, the priest came under the influence of Von Hügel. He submitted to that influence in such a way that he was finally expelled from his Order. And after poor Tyrrell's death "Miss Petre was anxious—and the baron doubtless shared her anxiety—that the Catholic authorities should not attempt to exploit a 'death-bed repentance' "[13] on Tyrrell's part. As a result, Miss Petre, "in consultation with the baron and Bremond," published a letter in the London *Times* to the effect that Tyrrell "would not wish to receive the sacraments at the cost of a retractation of what he has said and written in all sincerity and still considered to be the truth."[14] Von Hügel, characteristically, wrote to Miss Petre that he was "proud and grateful to have been allowed to share some of the responsibility"[15] for that letter. The publication of the letter forced the ecclesiastical authorities to refuse Christian burial to the unfortunate priest's body.

As far as it worked out in practice, then, Von Hügel's spiritual direction was completely undesirable. The baneful character of his influence came from definite principles, accepted by Von Hügel and urged by him on anyone who chose to take him seriously as a spiritual leader. Some of these principles he claimed to have received from his own spiritual director, an Abbé Huvelin. Others were his own concepts of the faith and of the Church.

The baron was much attached to certain "maxims" of Huvelin's. Here are some of them:

> Never read religious periodicals. They will bring you into all sorts of temptations. They will do you an unheard of harm. Myself, I never read them.

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[13] Cf. *Life*, p. 234.

[14] Cf. *ibid.*, p. 233. A passage from Von Hügel's diary, quoted on the previous page of the *Life*, assures us that he "Composed with M. Petre her signed statement to *Times* as to circumstances of Fr. Tyrrell's reception of Last Sacraments, Abbé Bremond helping." The text of the letter is in the *Autobiography and Life of George Tyrrell* (London: Arnold, 1912), II, 434f.

[15] Cf. *Life*, p. 234.

The ordinary apologetic is worthless. It is frequently ingenious, but entirely false. . . .[16]

According to Von Hügel, his director also assured him that he (Von Hügel) was seeking "truth, not orthodoxy," and that miracles definitely did not appeal to him (Huvelin). As for scholastics in general, Huvelin is said to have advised his penitent to "pass them by with a sweet, a very sweet, smile."[17]

The address "The Facts and Truths Concerning the Soul," published in Von Hügel's *Essays and Addresses,* contains more of his reminiscences about Huvelin's direction.

Let me illustrate what I mean from my own direct experience. After practicing a daily three-point meditation for some twenty-five years, the new Helper sent me by God advised me that my prayer should now be mainly informal—more of the prayer of quiet type; but that there should always remain short vocal prayers morning and night, Mass and Holy Communion twice a week, with Confession once a week or once a fortnight; and (perhaps most characteristic point of all) one decade of the rosary every day—this especially to help prevent my interior life from losing touch with the devotion of the people. After over thirty years of this mixed *régime,* I am profoundly convinced of the penetrating sagacity of this advice.[18]

Loisy duly designates Huvelin as a "saint," although he admits that he "will never be canonized in Rome."[19] The Modernists and those who admire them were always a bit careless in their use of the term "saint." At any rate, he was Von Hügel's favorite director, and Father Sheerin is perfectly right in asserting that, in the *Letters to a Niece,* Von Hügel was trying to present "the spiritual insights he had learned from his preceptor, Abbé Huvelin."[20]

[16] These "maxims" and others are listed in Loisy, *op. cit.,* I, 286.

[17] Cf. *ibid.* Incidentally, miracles were as distasteful (*antipathetique*) to Von Hügel as they had been to Huvelin himself. Thus we read in the *Letters* (p. 31): "Religion is not based on miracles. Put them on one side. They are often symbolical; at any rate the supernatural life is not based on them."

[18] Von Hügel, *Essays and Addresses on the Philosophy of Religion* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., 1926), II, 234.

[19] Cf. Loisy, *loc. cit.*

[20] Cf. *Letters,* p. 3. Cf. Von Hügel's own statement (*ibid.*, p. 22): "I learnt all that I know from Huvelin. What I teach you is him, not me. I

Von Hügel seems to have thought that Huvelin might eventually be beatified. Here is what he wrote to Thorold in 1921.

> My only difficulty about Huvelin is that I do not want myself to be too definitely connected with him *in print*. Not but I am most gratefully proud of all that I owe him; but that I want not to thwart his *cultus:* I want him eventually to be beatified, yet this might be indefinitely adjourned, if the timid (95% of our practising Catholics) get scared by his breadth.[21]

Actually it seems somewhat presumptuous to imagine that any man responsible for the "maxims" which Von Hügel attributed to Huvelin will ever be beatified by the Catholic Church. And it is quite clear that any spiritual direction which carries with it a distaste for miracles (Our Lord's Resurrection from the dead was the great miracle), which sneers at scholasticism and the philosophy of the schools, and which implies that the truth is in some way opposed to Catholic orthodoxy, will never be acceptable among loyal members of the true Church. The spiritual direction of Von Hügel, based as it is on such "maxims," must be considered as harmful, despite the fact that the old *poseur* seems duly to have said his decade of the rosary daily to help prevent his own spiritual life "from losing touch with the devotion of the people."

The lack of concern for orthodoxy, expressed in the "maxims," is quite in line with the current of Von Hügel's own teaching. As he said himself, he was interested in bringing out his own "discoveries" in the spiritual life. His direction was definitely not an effort to bring people to understand what the Church teaches as having been revealed by God, but a working to make others see what he himself had found in the domain of what he considered as religion. He wrote thus for the *Times Literary Supplement.*

> I should feel myself fatally hampered and oppressed by such a role as that of apologist, even though it be the first of all living Roman Catholic apologists, and though it be for the Church, or for Christ, or for just God Himself. More and more to live the spiritual life, increasingly to penetrate into the living Realities it reveals, and to

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learnt it from him. What a great saint he was! and what he taught me! 'One torch lights another torch' (Lucretius)."

[21] Quoted in the *Life*, p. 339.

express my discoveries, indefinitely deepened, extended, tested, and standing by those of others, as faithfully and fearlessly as I can: this alone I can strive to do.[22]

This is quite in line with what De la Bedoyère says of him in his Foreword to the recently re-issued volume of *Letters.*

What he did was to live the Christian faith, as few have done, testing, inquiring, experimenting at every turn, never subscribing to a judgment or formula until he had seen its truth for himself, fitting it into the great pattern whose grandeur is only revealed as it is thus traced in life, research, and prayer.[23]

What Von Hügel sought to give in his spiritual direction, then, is not what Our Lord teaches in His Mystical Body, but rather what he, Von Hügel himself, has gained or learned in the way of what he regarded as his own religious experience.

In her Introduction to the present volume of *Letters,* Mrs. Greene has recounted some of the things her uncle told her a few days before he died. Among them is the following statement about faith: "Christianity has taught us to care. Caring is the greatest thing—caring matters most. My faith is not enough—it comes and goes. I have it about some things and not about others."[24]

A faith that "comes and goes," that takes in some revealed truths but not others, is definitely not the faith which is the "beginning of man's salvation."[25] The Athanasian Creed, after listing the basic revealed truths about the Blessed Trinity and about the Incarnation, asserts: "This is the Catholic faith. If a person will not believe it faithfully and firmly, he will not be able to be saved."[26]

In line with Von Hügel's queer attitude towards the faith is his teaching about the "essentially supernatural," a teaching he claimed to have received from his old friend William Ward.

"Ideal" Ward, the most ultra-montane of Roman Catholics, used to teach, me and his disciples and students generally, and this as sound,

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[22] *Ibid.,* p. 320.
[23] *Letters,* p. 10.
[24] *Ibid.,* p. 51.
[25] This expression is used in the Vatican Council's definition of faith, set forth in its dogmatic constitution *Dei Filius.* Cf. *Denz.,* 1789.
[26] *Denz.,* 40.

accepted Roman Catholic doctrine, that any act of heroic service of one's neighbour or of devotion to duty, carried out by the soul not as a fancy, changeable to-morrow, but as something greater than itself, and as something that it would fall away from the deepest nature of things if it did not do the thing: that such an act is essentially supernatural, and does not, of itself, require any explicit recognition or clear consciousness of God at all, let alone Christ, or Moses, or Mohammed.[27]

Actually, according to genuine Catholic doctrine, only the Beatific Vision, the acts of the theological virtues, the infused moral virtues, and the gifts of the Holy Ghost are essentially or intrinsically supernatural acts. God in the Trinity of His Persons is the Center or the Source of the essentially supernatural order. The Beatific Vision and the acts of the three theological virtues have the Triune God as their specifying Object. The life of sanctifying grace, the life of which the Beatific Vision is the flowering and the ultimate perfection, is essentially or intrinsically supernatural. All of the acts (including those of the infused moral virtues and the gifts of the Holy Ghost), which go to make up that life, together with all the virtues from which these acts proceed, belong to the intrinsically or essentially supernatural order.

In this life there can be no such thing as an essentially supernatural act apart from faith, the acceptance, with the help of God's grace, of the truths revealed by God, on the authority of God Himself revealing. Hence it is nonsensical to teach that there can be an essentially supernatural act which does not "require any explicit recognition or clear consciousness of God at all."

To bracket Our Lord with Moses and Mohammed, as Von Hügel has done in this passage is completely irreverent and incorrect. It was, however, an action quite in keeping with Von Hügel's notion of revelation, as set forth in the *Letters to a Niece*. According to Von Hügel:

[God reveals Himself to us] in a two-fold manner—vaguely, but most powerfully—in the various laws and exigencies of life, and of our knowledge of it; and clearly, concretely, in and by the historic mani-

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[27] *Life*, p. 300.

festations in and through the great geniuses and revealers of religion—the prophets, and especially Jesus Christ. These latter manifestations get thoroughly learned only in and through the various historical religious bodies. It is through men trained through and through in these schools of religion that all the more solid and sane insights and habits, even of the vague religion, get given most of the point and steadiness which, as a matter of fact, they possess.[28]

What seems to be the clearest statement of Von Hügel's notion of revelation is contained in a letter of his to a Mr. Webb, a letter that embodies a very circumspect yet forceful request for a favorable review by Webb of Von Hügel's book, *The Mystical Element of Religion.* Von Hügel claimed that his book would have "no chance of even rough comprehension and fair-play" except at the hands of some individual who, like Webb, shared these three convictions: "the special gift and position of Christianity, and institutional, Cath.-Christianity; all religion in so far as sincere and experienced 'revealed'; and no hard nucleus."[29] Von Hügel's notion of revelation is something quite different from what is described in the second chapter of the Vatican Council's dogmatic constitution, *Dei Filius.*

For him, revelation was not any definite *locutio Dei ad homines* but rather a necessary condition of religion as sincere and experienced. He recognized Our Lord as a Prophet, and as the greatest of those through whom revelation had come to mankind. At the same time, however, he acknowledged "Moses, Mohammed, Buddha, etc."[30] as revealers of religion and as (imperfect) conceptions of Our Lord, given to men by other religions. Christianity is the highest type of religion, more perfect and complete than any of the others.

The Jewish religion was not false for the thirteen centuries of the pro-Christian operations; it was, for those times, God's fullest self-revelation and man's deepest apprehension of God; and this same

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[28] *Letters,* p. 70.

[29] Cf. *Life,* pp. 222 f.

[30] "But, no doubt, the non-Christian religions all furnish their followers with (imperfect) conceptions of God, so also with (imperfect) conceptions of Christ (Moses, Mohammed, Buddha, etc.) and imperfect conceptions of the Church (temple, mosque, etc.) (*Letters,* p. 116). Cf. above where he speaks of "the great geniuses and revealers of religion—the prophets, and especially Jesus Christ" (*Letters,* p. 70).

Jewish religion can be, *is*, still the fullest religious truth for numerous individuals whom God leaves in their good faith; in their not directly requiring the fuller, the fullest, light and aid to Christianity. What is specially true of the Jewish religion is, in a lesser but still very real degree, true of Mohammedanism, and even of Hinduism, of Parseeism, etc.[31]

Two other passages in the recently re-issued book bring out this basic element in the teaching of Von Hügel. The first is from one of his letters to Mrs. Greene.

The synagogue here in Bayswater is still now, on 11 December, 1918, a fragmentary but very real revelation of God and, however unconsciously, a very real pedagogue to Christ. The little mosque at Woking is still, for some souls, a yet more fragmentary but still real revelation of God and teacher of truths more completely taught by Christianity. All this, however, only in so far as the souls thus helped have no interior incitement to move on and up into a fuller, truer, religion.[32]

The other passage is in the Introduction. It formed a part of one of the discourses or instructions delivered to her by her uncle.

I want you to hold very clearly, to see as clearly as you can see anything, the truth not that all religions are true, but that all contain some element of truth, some fragment from God. But they vary in value—greater or less—*they are never interchangeable*. God has never left the world in complete and groping darkness; all religions contain *some* light from God. They are all from him.[33]

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[31] *Letters*, p. 115. Von Hügel seems never to have adverted to the fact that pre-Christian Judaic religious belief centered around the acceptance of God's message about the Messias who was to come. Since the time of Our Lord's death on Calvary, it has centered around the repudiation of the Redeemer who actually came. The people who believed God's promise of the coming Redeemer constituted the Old Testament *congregatio fidelium*, the *ecclesia* or the kingdom of God under the old dispensation. After the Jewish politico-religious commonwealth had rejected Our Lord, its members were no longer members of the *congregatio fidelium*, but rather of the *generatio prava*, which men had to leave to enter the true *ecclesia* of the New Testament if they were to attain to salvation. Cf. *Acts*, 2:40.

[32] *Letters*, pp. 63 f.

[33] *Ibid.*, p. 41.

A spiritual direction that works to bring notions of this sort into the mind of the person being directed is manifestly unacceptable. If a person is led to imagine that all religions are from God, and that the way of salvation is open to people in all religions, that person is being harmed spiritually. The fact of the matter is that all error is a perversion of truth, and that the higher or more important the truth misapprehended or twisted or misinterpreted, the worse is the ensuing error. The scholastics, whom Von Hügel passed by with his "sweet, very sweet, smile," brought out this fact in the formula *"Corruptio optimi pessima."*

Actually there is an element of truth in every religion, but the individual religious belief is not merely or essentially this basic element of truth. As things really stand, the religious teaching of non-Catholic and non-Christian religions involves a rejection of Our Lord's Church and sometimes even of Our Lord Himself. Men do not approach to God by repudiating the Mystical Body of Christ, or by refusing to accept the Divine Saviour, the Incarnate Word of the living God. Nor, for that matter, are men being helped in their spiritual lives by being told and led to imagine that salvation is something attainable even by way of the rejection of Our Lord and of His Mystical Body.

In his encyclical letter *Quanto conficiamur moerore,* Pope Pius IX warned the Bishops of Italy against "the very serious error in which some Catholics unfortunately have fallen, who hold that men living in errors and apart from the true faith and Catholic unity can attain to eternal life."[34] Von Hügel ignored all the doctrines of this sort and represented the Church itself, in his system of teaching, as a valuable, but still not in any way necessary, aid to salvation.

The Church's teaching on this subject is perhaps best brought out in the opening paragraphs of Pope Leo XIII's encyclical *Humanum genus.*

> The race of man, after its miserable fall from God, the Creator and the Giver of heavenly gifts, "through the envy of the devil," separated into two diverse parts, of which the one steadfastly contends for

[34] Cf. *Denz.,* 1677. The same truth is brought out in the *Singulari quadam,* the allocution delivered by Pope Pius IX to the Cardinals and Bishops who had come to Rome for the pronouncement of the dogma of Our Lady's Immaculate Conception. Cf. *Denz.,* 1646.

truth and virtue, the other for those things which are contrary to virtue and to truth. The one is the Kingdom of God on earth, the true Church of Jesus Christ; and those who desire from their heart to be united with it so as to gain salvation must of necessity serve God and His only-begotten Son with their whole mind and with an entire will. The other is the kingdom of Satan, in whose possession and control are all whosoever follow the fatal example of their leader and of our first parents, those who refuse to obey the divine and eternal law, and who have many aims of their own in contempt of God, and many aims also against God.

This twofold kingdom St. Augustine keenly discerned and described after the manner of two cities, contrary in their laws because striving for contrary objects; and with subtle brevity he expressed the efficient cause of each in these words: "Two loves formed two cities: the love of self, reaching even to contempt of God, an earthly city; and the love of God, reaching even to contempt of self, a heavenly one." At every period of time each has been in conflict with the other, with a variety and multiplicity of weapons and of warfare, although not always with equal ardor and assault.[35]

The picture of the Church and of its relation to man's spiritual welfare and salvation drawn by Von Hügel and inculcated in the *Letters to a Niece* is completely opposed to the truths on the same subjects taught by the *magisterium* of the Catholic Church. It is at best hopelessly misleading to describe other religions as teachers "of truths more completely taught by Christianity." The denial of the true Church, the denial of Jesus Christ, and the denial in some instances of the One true God, are as integrally parts of other religious systems as are the statements which members of these groups hold in common with the members of the Mystical Body itself. Objectively some statements of religious belief, set forth by the non-Catholic religious bodies, are declarations of opposition to, rather than approaches to, the teaching of the one true Church of Jesus Christ.

Mrs. Greene's Introduction to the *Letters* contains a statement of one of Von Hügel's favorite teachings, the one on the invisible Church and the visible Church. In one of the lessons he gave to her, he spoke of "Both the communion of souls—the visible

[35] The text is in Father Wynne's edition of *The Great Encyclical Letters of Pope Leo XIII* (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1903), pp. 83 f.

body of Christ and his Spirit on earth—and the invisible Church; the body and the soul, the Bride of Christ."[36]

During the very time that the *Letters to a Niece* were being written, Von Hügel published, in his *Essays and Addresses on the Philosophy of Religion,* a paper, "The Essentials of Catholicism," which he had read at a religious gathering of Protestants in 1913. In this paper we find what he actually meant by his teaching about the "invisible" Church.

> Nothing indeed is more certain than that Roman Catholicism remains to this hour, even in its strictest official definitions, hostile to, and assuredly incompatible with, such a sheer identification of the Visible and the Invisible Church. What otherwise is, *e.g.,* the meaning of the doctrine of Invincible Ignorance, or of the fallibility of all excommunications, or the still most orthodox principle: "there are many members of the Visible Church who are not members of the Invisible Church, and there are many members of the Invisible Church who are not members of the Visible Church"? Two principles and no more underlie, I think, all the Roman definitions in this matter:
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> 1. The Invisible, as a whole, is related to, is awakened by, and can and should (and does) variously permeate, the Visible as a whole—not only in the case of the Roman Catholic Church, or of Christianity generally, but, in their respective lesser degrees and other ways, also in the case of Judaism, and of the other religions. And
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> 2. So little is the Invisible as a whole unrelated to the Visible as a whole, that the full and balanced, the typical growth in religious depth and fruitfulness is *not* a growth away from the stimulations, occasions, concomitants, vehicles and expressions of sense, and away from the frank admission of their operation, but, contrariwise, is a growth by means of, and into, an ever richer and wider sensible material, and into an ever wiser and more articulate placing, understanding and spiritualising of such means.[37]

In the first of these two "principles" enunciated by Von Hügel, we find that he considers the so-called "Visible Church" as not in any way limited to the Catholic Church at all. It is extended into the religious sects that call themselves Christian, and also, to a lesser but still real extent, to non-Christian religious bodies. The so-called "Invisible Church," according to Von Hügel, was supposed to permeate and thus to vitalize all of them.

[36] Cf. *Letters,* p. 32.
[37] *Essays and Addresses,* I, 230.

By means of this distinction between the "invisible" Church and the "visible," Von Hügel brought out what must be regarded as the central thesis in all of his Modernistic teaching. Basically that teaching was a denial of the Catholic dogma about the unicity and the dignity of the true Church. It was a complete repudiation of all that the *magisterium* had ever said about the necessity of the Catholic Church for the attainment of eternal salvation.

Von Hügel was not by any means the only writer or lecturer who imagined a distinction between a "visible" church and an "invisible" one. Others made that same mistake, although few of them managed to crowd so much doctrinal error into their teaching as did Von Hügel. Now, since the issuance of Pope Pius XII's masterly encyclical, the *Mystici Corporis,* there is no excuse whatsoever for foisting any such blunders upon the Christian people, under the guise of spiritual direction or in any other way.

The *Mystici Corporis* speaks thus about the concept of the "invisible" Church.

> Hence those who describe the Church as something that can neither be perceived nor seen, and as something merely "spiritual," as they say, by which many Christian communities, although separated from one another in faith, are still bound together by an invisible bond, are mistaken about a divine truth (*a divina veritate . . . aberrant*).[38]

The same encyclical has this to say about a distinction between a Church that is invisible and spiritual, and one that is visible and juridical.

> Hence We regret and reprove the sad error of those who dream up for themselves an imaginary Church, as a kind of society nourished and formed by charity, to which—contemptuously—they oppose another, which they call juridical.[39]

Von Hügel's teaching on the true Church is completely opposed to the doctrine of the *Mystici Corporis.*

Now in evaluating Von Hügel's statements about the Church and its life, we should not lose sight of his convictions about its relation to its divine Founder and Head. It was his contention that "as historians we now know that the institution of the Church is far less directly and completely attributable to Our

[38] The text is in *Acta Apostolicae Sedis,* XXXV (1943), 199 f.
[39] *Ibid.,* 224.

Lord than used to be believed."[40] He likewise believed that "historical criticism is demonstrating, with apparent ruthlessness, the limited and non-infallible character of Our Lord's recorded manifestation of human knowledge; His adoption of all the scientific, literary, critical assumptions, picturings and beliefs of His own age and country—even inclusive of such an apparently spiritual belief as that in the proximity of His Second Coming."[41]

It would be unfortunate indeed if the men and women of our time were to be led to take spiritual direction from an individual who taught openly that Our Lord Himself was in error on various points, and that His Church's foundation was "far less directly and completely attributable" to Him than used to be believed by Catholic theologians.

There are numerous other faults in the book of *Letters* now so enthusiastically recommended to the Catholic people of the United States. Simply to mention one of them: Von Hügel frequently speaks to his niece about the practice of Confession and of the reception of Holy Communion.[42] He is referring directly to her activities in the Church of England. His letters were written long after the issuance of Pope Leo XIII's letter *Apostolicae curae,* declaring the invalidity of Anglican Orders. He is speaking of "Holy Communion" in a society in which there was no valid priesthood to confect the Blessed Sacrament, and yet he speaks of this practice in exactly the same way that one would speak of the reception of Holy Communion in the true Church of Christ.

[40] *Essays and Addresses,* II, 11. Von Hügel's teaching on this subject is brought out in another passage of the same essay. He held that "historical criticism has ended by clearly establishing how that Church organization and Officialism, in all but the very rudimentary, Synoptic-Gospel form of their original operation—a form so akin to the Franciscan Brotherhood during the Poverello's lifetime—is not the direct and deliberate creation of Our Blessed Lord Himself" (*ibid.,* II, 18). The Church organization of which he spoke was not only that of the Catholic Church, but of all sections of "institutional Christianity" (*ibid.,* II, 3).

Thus Von Hügel was quite consistent with his own basic position when he claimed: "There can be no more 'pure' Christianity, in the actual practice, or (if he is historically unprejudiced) in the reasoned conception of the modern man now, than Christ's own Christianity was 'pure'" (*ibid.,* II, 19).

[41] *Ibid.,* II, 20.

[42] Cf. *Letters,* especially pp. 213 f.

He speaks of the practice of Confession, and gives his ponderous advice on the subject without ever hinting at the fact that the "priest" to whom his niece was going to confess had neither the orders nor the jurisdiction to administer the Sacrament of Penance.

Lastly, there is in the book an expression of his own attitude towards the Catholic Church, an attitude which he asks his niece to imitate in her own relations with her religious group. It was advice that came from and through a "saintly leader," obviously Huvelin. "I never have gained the bigger lights on myself, except that way. To love Holy Communion, yet tactfully, unironically, to escape from all Eucharistic Guilds, etc.; to care for God's work in the world especially in and through Christianity, and yet (again quite silently, with full contrary encouragement to others who are helped by such literature) never opening a Church paper or magazine; and so on, and so on."[43] This attitude is quite consistent with the character of a man who said his decade of the Rosary every day so as not to lose touch with the devotion of the people. It is not, however, an attitude which is inculcated in any acceptable spiritual direction.

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It is perfectly obvious that anyone unfortunate enough to read this book of Von Hügel's letters with an idea of forming his mind and directing his activity in accordance with the teachings expressed therein would suffer serious spiritual harm. In one way, however, the book has been extremely valuable. It has served to show up the inherent shoddiness of the Modernist claims to intellectual superiority. And, in this way, our contemporary Catholic scholars can derive immense profit from it.

Certainly there are true and beautiful sentences in the *Letters*. Yet the over-all teaching contained in them is hopelessly faulty. And it is obviously faulty, not because Von Hügel is trying to set forth some teaching too lofty for ordinary mortals to understand, but for the purely pedestrian reason that Von Hügel was strikingly ignorant of the subject on which he was writing. The explanation of his ignorance is quite manifest. He did not read the scholastics, and the teachings requisite for the understanding of the subjects Von Hügel attempted to teach are found in the writings of the

[43] *Ibid.*, p. 122.

scholastic theologians. He did not understand the authority of the declarations of the ecclesiastical *magisterium* itself. He once wrote:

> Certainly it will be well for your own peace and fruitfulness of mind and heart, if you can get *yourself habitually to see, feel, and practise a catholicism which recognizes itself bound to* two things, but to two things only:
>
> (a) the acceptance, *ex animo,* of all the solemn definitions and condemnations of the Church; and
>
> (b) the avoidance of ignoring or contravening even lesser ecclesiastical decisions (e.g. Pius Xth's Encyclicals and the Decisions of the Biblical Commission) without serious reasons and real careful study and knowledge of the subject matters, or without restraint, and, wherever possible, silence.[44]

No educated Catholic could write such nonsense. The Vatican Council had taught during the time of Von Hügel's youth that dogmas of the Church, divinely revealed truths, were set forth by the Church, not only in solemn judgment, but also in the Church's ordinary and universal *magisterium.* All of the authoritative doctrinal declarations of the *ecclesia docens* call for sincere and inward assent. Von Hügel, in the passage quoted above, seems merely to be giving directions on the proper way to contend against them.

There are some excellent lines, and even some fine passages, in the mass of spiritual direction contained in Von Hügel's *Letters to a Niece.* Yet, because of the numerous and serious errors and imperfections in the book, errors and imperfections stemming from the man's utter incompetence in the field of sacred theology and of spiritual direction, and from his completely faulty basic attitude towards the Catholic faith and the ecclesiastical *magisterium,* the book can only be harmful to any individual unfortunate enough to take it as a guide. The affair of man's advance in the love of God within the Mystical Body of Christ is far too important to entrust to the bumbling ineptitude of such as Friedrich von Hügel.

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[44] *Life,* pp. 264 f.

Answers to Questions

A VEIL FOR THE CONFESSIONAL

Question: Is it not advisable that there be a veil or cloth in the confessional, over the grating, so that the penitent will not clearly see the priest? I suggest this, because I believe that sometimes the fact that the penitent sees the priest distinctly renders the penitent embarrassed and may even be the occasion of a bad confession.

Answer: The idea proposed by the questioner—that measures should be taken to prevent the penitent from perceiving the confessor too clearly—is surely in accord with the mind of the Church. The Code prescribes that the grille in the confessional shall be "*tenuiter* perforata" (Canon 909, § 2)—which means that the perforations should be small. A decree of the Holy See, given three centuries ago, stipulated that the openings be so small that the little finger cannot pass through them (Cf. Cappello, *De sacramentis* [Rome, 1943], II, n. 632). The type of grille found in many confessionals nowadays, with apertures so large that the confessor can be clearly seen, is not in accordance with these rulings. Hence, if a grille has such large openings, I suggest the plan recommended by the questioner, the use of a light cloth to cover the grille. It is possible that the questioner's fear that bad confessions may sometimes be occasioned by too open a grille is justifiable.

A NUN'S CONFESSION

Question: If a nun attached to a parish school comes to confession every Saturday afternoon to one of the priests of the parish and tells him that she has chosen him as her regular confessor, what procedure should the priest follow?

Answer: Church law supposes that religious women shall go to confession regularly to the ordinary confessor appointed for them by the Bishop. If, for a good reason, a nun wishes to have another

priest as her regular confessor, the law makes provision, by stipulating that the Bishop may assign to her a special confessor "for her peace of soul and greater progress in the way of God" (Canon 520, § 2). Hence, it is not in accordance with Church law for a nun, on her own authority, to select as her regular confessor a priest who has not been appointed to this office. On the other hand, if a religious woman, for tranquillity of conscience, confesses to any priest approved for women's confessions by the local Ordinary, the confession is valid and lawful, provided it is heard in a church or oratory (even semi-public) or in a place designated for women's confessions (Canon 522; *AAS,* XX [1928], 61; XXVII [1935], 92). The Code does not lay down any rules as to the frequency of confessions of this sort allowed to a nun, though it surely does not permit the occasional confessor to become a nun's regular confessor. Hence, the priest to whom the nun goes to confession as described by the questioner could hear her confession quite frequently; but he should inform her that he cannot serve as her regular confessor, as long as he has not been appointed to this office by the local Ordinary. A rare exception is granted by Jone, who says: "If a religious woman, in some very extraordinary case, could not obtain a special confessor as stipulated by Canon 520, § 2, and could not find help and aid in the confessors assigned to the community, she could habitually go to the confessor granted for her tranquillity of conscience" (*Commentarium in codicem juris canonici* [Paderborn, 1950], II, p. 436).

PHOTOGRAPHING SACRED FUNCTIONS

Question: What procedure should a pastor follow in regulating the growing custom of photographing sacred functions, which is very distracting to the priest, especially when it is accompanied by the glaring flash of bulbs?

Answer: The custom described by our questioner is becoming so common that it constitutes a grave menace to the reverence due to our sacred ceremonies. At a nuptial Mass there is an almost continuous series of flashes, as the photographer scurries about the sanctuary, seeking the most favorable points of vantage.

Even at the beautiful ceremony of First Communion almost every child is photographed by a relative or friend at the moment when he receives the Sacred Host. Now, while we can appreciate the desire of our Catholic people to have a photograph of some important event of a religious nature in their lives, to serve as a remembrance and inspiration in future years, we should not allow the external ceremonies of our Church to be regarded as the most important feature of our sacramental rites. This impression is likely to grow among our people if we allow this craze for snapshots of sacred functions to grow unchecked. Hence, it would be well for pastors to lay down rules for those who wish to photograph liturgical ceremonies. For example, at a wedding it should be sufficient to allow photographs of the entrance of the party, of the actual marriage ceremony and of the departure from the altar after the Mass. It is not fitting to have flash-light pictures made during the consecration or the communion. Similarly, it could be prescribed that on the occasion of First Communion a child could be photographed before or after the ceremony (for example, in the procession to the church) but not during the actual reception of the Sacred Host.

OBLIGATION OF THE *MISSA PRO POPULO*

Question: If a pastor receives so small a revenue from his people that it would not even supply for the stipends commensurate with the number of Masses he is bound to celebrate *pro populo,* is he thereby excused from the obligation of offering the Masses for this intention—at least, some of them?

Answer: The Code definitely answers this question in the negative, when it states that the bishop or parish priest must celebrate the Masses *pro populo* "no excuse being permitted on the ground of inadequate income or any other pretext" (Can. 339, § 1). For this obligation is attached to the pastoral office itself, abstracting from financial remuneration. However, as Cappello suggests (*De sacramentis* [Rome, 1954], I, nn. 626, 629), a pastor, whose revenue is so small that the celebration of all the prescribed Masses *pro populo* would be a grave burden, can apply to the Sacred

Congregation of the Council for a reduction of the number. Or, in a situation of this kind, the local Ordinary might provide the pastor with a yearly revenue equal to the stipends he would receive if he did not have the obligation of applying the required Masses *pro populo.*

THE CELEBRANT OF THE *MISSA PRO POPULO*

Question: A pastor wishes the Sunday High Mass to be regularly the *Missa pro populo,* since the greater number of the parishioners come to this Mass and he is desirous that they receive the greatest possible benefit by their attendance at the Holy Sacrifice. In such a case may the pastor alternate with the curate in celebrating the *Missa pro populo* (giving this latter the due stipend) or must the pastor make his low Mass the *Missa pro populo* on Sundays when he does not celebrate the High Mass?

Answer: The law of the Church prescribes that the pastor himself shall celebrate the *Missa pro populo,* unless he is legitimately impeded, in which case he shall have the Mass celebrated by another priest. In the event that the pastor is legitimately absent from his parish, he may say the Mass himself wherever he may be or have it celebrated in his parish by the priest who takes his place (Can. 339, §4; 466, §1,5). The problem presented by the questioner is whether the laudable desire to have the High Mass celebrated every Sunday as the *Missa pro populo* is a sufficient reason for the regular (every second Sunday) transferal of this intention to the curate. It would seem that this reason is not sufficient to justify such a frequent transferal (Cf. Cappello, *De sacramentis* [Rome, 1943], I, n. 623). Since an occasional transfer of this obligation without any reasonable cause would seem to be a venial sin (*ibid.,* n. 628), it could safely be held that for the reason mentioned by the questioner such a transfer could be made without any sin on rare occasions—for example, five or six times a year. On other occasions, if the pastor does not himself celebrate the High Mass he should offer his low Mass *pro populo.*

FRANCIS J. CONNELL, C.SS.R.

ALTAR STEPS

Question: I am planning on remodeling the sanctuary of the church. I want to enlarge the predella and the only practical way of doing so is to remove one of the three steps. I cannot encroach on the present sanctuary space as it is already too small. I have heard that when there is a step leading from the nave of the church into the sanctuary it is sufficient to have only two steps leading to the altar. Would you be kind enough to tell me if there is any foundation for this "two step" theory?

Answer: The authorities all direct that there should be an uneven number of steps. Monsignor Collins states that the main altar should have three steps, "two risers and the predella." His recommendation may be a solution to our inquirer's difficulty. "If there is need to have the altar at a higher elevation, this may be effected by raising the level of the whole sanctuary with steps at the entrance of the sanctuary. In the sanctuary itself there should be no steps, except those leading up to the altar." To meet the requirements we suggest that possibly the steps could be slightly smaller by reducing the dimensions of each step, v.g., instead of two steps of twelve inches each, why not try three steps of eight inches?

WAY OF THE CROSS INDULGENCE

Question: In a religious institution of considerable size, a non-resident priest goes from station to station while the people in residence attending this devotion remain in their pews. Do all gain the indulgence or is it necessary that all move from station to station?

Answer: When the Way of the Cross is made publicly as described by our inquirer it is sufficient if the chaplain or priest with two acolytes move from station to station. The faithful usually rise and kneel for every station from their pews. If the community is small enough so that all could move conveniently from station to station they should do so. The indulgence attached to this devotion is not lost by the faithful remaining in their pews.

BLESSING AFTER HOLY MASS

Question: Is it permitted for a priest to give his priestly blessing to the Mass servers immediately after Mass in the sacristy while he is still vested with all his vestments—not just stole and alb?

Answer: Most of the authors in specifying directions for altar boys make no mention of a blessing to be given by the celebrant to the servers upon their return to the sacristy. Fr. Adrian Fortescue mentions that the server assists the celebrant to unvest and bows to him and "in some churches, it is the custom for the celebrant to give the server his blessing after Mass at this point." From observation, the blessing is given immediately upon return to the sacristy, where such a custom exists.

SANCTUARY LAMP COLOR

Question: Is it correct to use a red sanctuary lamp or is it only tolerated? Liturgical books seem to be seriously at variance. One tells us that only a colored glass is permitted; another that white is prescribed and the red only tolerated. Still another: "approved authors seem to prefer white." The *Catholic Dictionary* tells us that in English-speaking countries the red sanctuary lamp is customary. In consequence of this divergence it may happen that one man throws the red light out, and his successor throws the white one out again. A clear-cut decision would be very much appreciated.

Answer: The rubrics neither suggest nor order the proper color for the sanctuary lamp. Anson recommends white for the glass, this being the color associated with the Blessed Sacrament according to Roman usage. To inquiries, the Congregation of Sacred Rites has answered that the use of various colored lamps, red, blue and green being mentioned specifically, is permitted. "However," one writer notes, "if there are other lamps in the church, it is better that they be provided with a glass of a color different from that used before the Blessed Sacrament."

TABERNACLE INTERIOR

Question: What is the prescribed lining for the interior of the tabernacle? We have a marble tabernacle with a bronze door. The interior is polished white Vermont marble.

Answer: The interior of the tabernacle where the Blessed Sacrament is reserved must be lined with white silk, with gold or silver plate or at least gilded. One writer suggests that if silk is used, this may be draped or stretched on wooden boards. Seldom do we see lining of gold. Many of the writers recommend that the interior veils be eliminated since they so often have only a nuisance value.

MASS RUBRICS

Question: When distributing Holy Communion does the celebrant leave the tabernacle door open or closed? Precisely when does the priest say *Dominus vobiscum* before the last gospel?

Answer: We are instructed to close the door of the tabernacle when distributing Holy Communion, unless the tabernacle is empty. With regard to the second question, the rubrics state that the celebrant of Mass does not say the *Dominus vobiscum* until he is facing the altar card or book for the last gospel, the same position as when he is reading the first gospel of the Mass. He does not say *Dominus vobiscum* while facing the people or turning from the people after he has given the blessing.

PROPER DRESS FOR ALTAR BOYS

Question: I have noticed at Forty Hours' Devotion and other extraordinary ceremonies the great difference in the dress of altar boys. At some places they wear capes over their surplices, or very fancy and elaborate cinctures or belts and even gloves. I wonder about all this and whether or not I am at fault for not

having our parish altar boys dress accordingly. What is the correct dress for altar boys?

Answer: The correct and only proper dress for altar boys is the cassock and surplice. They take the place of clerics and the proper dress for clerics is simply the cassock and surplice. All rubricians agree that the correct dress for altar boys is the black cassock and plain linen surplice, regardless of the nature of the ceremony at which they function. "The use of red for such cassocks and accessories dates from the nineteenth century and no earlier, and however attractive red cassocks may be to some, and distracting to others, they do not really harmonize well with the dignity of Christian worship. As ministers of the altar the servers have dignity enough from their office without these red vestments; and I believe that both for them and for the choir-boys the true and proper vestments are the black cassock and the full surplice" (Roulin, *Vestments and Vesture*).

WALTER J. SCHMITZ, S.S.

Analecta

A pontifical institute for religious vocations was established by Pope Pius XII on Feb. 11, 1955. The institute has for its purpose the dissemination of information on the dignity and benefits of the states of Christian perfection and the promotion among the faithful of all parts of the world of a union of prayer and good works. This primary institute in Rome is authorized to aggregate to itself other institutes and persons throughout the world for the pursuit of the above aims accordingly as necessity or utility dictates. It is also authorized to extend to aggregated persons or institutes the indulgences and spiritual favors of the primary institute. The *Motu proprio* regarding the establishment of this institute as well as the statutes for it are to be found in the May issue of the *Acta*.

The felicitations and blessing of His Holiness to Cardinal Pizzardo on the occasion of his Silver Jubilee as a bishop appear in this same issue.

On April 3 His Holiness addressed an audience of members of the First World Congress for the Prevention of Accidents to Workers, commending them on the purpose of their society and pointing out to them the similarity of their temporal aims to those of Our Blessed Lord who strove to alleviate the misery and sorrow of the people.

In an audience granted to the members of the Latin Medical Union Convention on April 7, His Holiness pointed to the Christ-like role of charity that the physician may exercise in the pursuit of his calling. He called upon the physicians to heed the background of Christian Faith which is theirs, safeguarding themselves from the threat of materialism about them in the world and in their field of medicine through an insistence upon spiritual values in the life of man.

In his Easter allocution to the world the Pope dwells upon the Resurrection, its relationship to Faith and religion, and the absolute necessity of religion in the life of man. He points to the fact that the Resurrection is an historic truth shining forth over the centuries without shadow of doubt. Not only has Christ risen,

the Holy Father continues, but He lives in our midst in His Church, concealing Himself within it to instil into humanity an interior and unfailing life through grace and peace. For the Christian enlightened by the truth of the Resurrection, Faith means life, says the Holy Father, and the deeper the Faith of the Christian, the better life does the Christian lead. Only in the realization that life and religion must be intimately united can mankind reach a solution of the problem harassing it today.

That a conviction on the necessity of religion in life be established, the Holy Father bestows his blessing upon all men of good-will, upon those persevering in the true Faith, upon the civic leaders of men in whose hands rests the tremendous power to promote or to inflict serious harm on mankind so that they may work for a lasting peace through understanding, progressive disarmament, and laws that respect human dignity, social justice, and fraternal charity. Finally, before imparting his special blessing to the poor of the world, the sick, and those oppressed with sorrow, His Holiness prays for the scientists who in their research point the way to human advance through peaceful discoveries rather than war.

A list of cases decided by the Rota in 1954 appears at the end of the May *Acta.*

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Book Reviews

MENTAL HEALTH IN A MAD WORLD. By James A. Magner. Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1953. Pp. vii + 303. $3.75.

An impressive number of books has been written in the last few decades on mental health, personal mental hygiene, personality adjustment and related topics, and each year new ones are added to the list. However, few such books have been written from the Catholic standpoint. For almost twenty years the only existing Catholic publications on mental health problems were those of R. C. McCarthy and Thomas V. Moore. Only within the last two years is this gap being filled. Since the publication of the present book by Father Magner, two more works by Catholic authors have appeared.

Father Magner's book is different from other publications of its kind, inasmuch as it shuns the so-called scientific approach, and remains on the popular level; this does not mean that it is any the less readable or less practicable or less acceptable. Upon reading certain publications on mental health, one may at times ask the perplexing question whether they really contribute to improving mental health or rather tend to make a mad world still madder. The advice given in some of these works is surely not inspired by Catholic principles and not infrequently without even basic common sense. What makes the present book so acceptable is that it is grounded in sound moral principles and practical common sense. The latter is a precious gift, all the more necessary when we approach such eminently practical problems encountered in the sphere of mental health. Of such common sense Father Magner possesses a fair dose. His observations also display a keen humor capable of smiling at human foibles and *ridendo dicere verum.*

The author's main concern is to show when and how a person can help himself to prevent a mental breakdown or to restore the mind when it is in danger of losing its balance. He recognizes, of course, that there are cases in which a person no longer is able to help himself. Such cases should be referred to the competent authority of a phychiatrist, counselor, or phychotherapist. We note with satisfaction that the author rarely—if at all—uses the term adjustment which has

become some sort of a magic word in the mental health vocabulary. Instead, he uses a straightforward language which everybody understands, thereby avoiding the rather thorny question what a person should adjust to. Thorny, I say, because the recommendation of adjustment which pays no heed to the higher moral principles remains pretty unstable.

In one of the early chapters the author teaches people how to relax. Despite all the stress and strain, all the pressure and tension and frustration of the modern world, people should learn to practice the art of relaxing as a matter of principle. Incidentally, among the recommendations for relaxation we do not find, fortunately, that of tracing little figures in the air, as was recently recommended by another book on mental health. The author advises to conquer fear, but he disagrees with some other mental hygienists who believe that all fear endangers mental health. There is a very rational fear and "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

Instead of indulging in grumbling, complaining, criticizing, worrying, we should accent the positive, constructive, bright side of life; we should substitute planning for worry and learn to enjoy life. This is, according to the author, one of the first principles in the development of mental health. An excellent chapter is that on the sense of direction. We must know what we want from life, where we are going and how to get there. Mental hygienists are wont to repeat that man, adolescent as well as adult, should develop a wholesome attitude toward sex. But the term "wholesome" is sometimes described by them in such a manner that the attitude becomes quite unwholesome from the ethical standpoint. These authors will likewise tell us that sex play is a common form of sexual behavior, that the absence of masturbation, in some period of male adolescence, indicates an unusually complicated and untypical way of growing up. At the most young people are advised against "undesirable" relationships, but scarcely a word about the moral aspect of them because "science" is supposed to be divorced from morality. Obviously, Father Magner's approach is altogether different and he sums it up by stating that mental health is best promoted by a clean mind. The author maintains that a basic need for mental health is that of self-confidence, but he rightly warns against over-confidence. Man certainly should strive to become mature, but some authors define maturity in such a way that it implies complete independence. The final chapter of the book deals with religion and mental health. It is significant that several mental hygienists avoid

speaking of religion altogether; some recent authors introduce the topic almost apologetically. No wonder rather strange statements are made, such as that a religion which believes in personal guilt is a threat to mental health, or worse, that dogma is a mental health handicap. Remarks of this kind are remitted to the title: mental hygienists look at religion. Father Magner, on the contrary, tells us how the Catholic religion looks at mental hygienists.

In the light of such and similar contrasting approaches to the problems of mental health, it is obvious that this is a wholesome book. It is well written, in an easy, fluent style. A little meditation upon the advice given in the book would be of great help to many people. If this advice were followed on a wide scale, it would make for a less mad world.

JAMES VAN DER VELDT, O.F.M.

SOREN KIERKEGAARD AND CATHOLICISM. By Heinrich Roos, S.J. Translated by Richard M. Brackett, S.J. Westminster, Md.: The Newman Press, 1954. Pp. xx+62. $1.00.

This translation by Father Brackett makes available in English an interesting lecture given by Fr. Heinrich Roos to the Kierkegaard Society in Copenhagen in 1952. As it is characterized by the brevity demanded of its original lecture form, this booklet admittedly does not explore all the aspects of the problems that it examines; but it does outline in admirable fashion both Catholic and anti-Catholic tendencies in Kierkegaard, and presents a list of Catholic works in Kierkegaard's library when it was auctioned off after the author's death.

Father Roos, realizing that Kierkegaard did not actually become a Catholic, wisely abstains from exaggerating the Catholic tendencies of the famous Dane, taking, it would seem, a much more conservative position than Father Erich Przywara, who, in his *Das Geheimnis Kierkegaards,* refers to an "anonymous Catholicism" in Kierkegaard.

The thinker's experience with Catholicism was entirely vicarious, since he had neither friends nor relatives of the Faith; nor does it appear likely that he had any familiarity with St. Thomas or any of the great mediaeval Scholastics. He was familiar, however, with the works of the Catholic writers, Johann Adam Möhler, a professor of

theology at Munich and Tübingen, and Josef von Görres, a professor of history at the University of Munich.

It is quite true that Kierkegaard was openly antagonistic to the established Danish Church, but what is more significant in the light of his influence in contemporary Protestantism is that he seems to have been extremely critical of Protestantism itself. On March 30, 1855, he writes:

> Protestantism, viewed from a Christian standpoint, is quite simply a fraud, a dishonesty which adulterates the teaching of Christianity, its perception of the world and life itself, as soon as it becomes a principle for Christianity, not a corrective for any particular time and place.

Earlier, in 1854, he had written: "Protestantism is quite untenable. It is a revolt, occasioned by proclaiming the Apostle (Paul) to the neglect of the Master (Christ)."

Kierkegaard's criticism of Luther is at times severe, particularly when he accuses the latter of confusion in initiating a reform that has no room for asceticism; but his attitude is not one of undiluted criticism, as he concedes a certain "corrective" value to Luther's work, and apparently used the heresiarch's *Postille* in Danish translation for devotional purposes. Father Roos suggests further that Kierkegaard's opposition to Luther is to be found primarily in his private writings, rather than in his more widely circulated books.

Kierkegaard's fundamental hostility to Catholicism is to be found in a fundamental subjectivism and anti-intellectualism. His idiom here seems to be quite Kantian. It will be recalled that Kant had made the existence of God a postulate of the "practical reason" (*praktischen Vernunft*) rather than a conclusion of the "pure" or "thinking reason" (*reinen Vernunft*). In his *Sickness Unto Death* Kierkegaard makes God's existence a "postulate" having no objective validity. To the Dane, reason is not of the slightest use in the approach to faith.

This reviewer is not at all convinced that Kierkegaard was ever actually close to Catholicism, however perceptive he was in recognizing the weakness of the Protestantism of his day.

It is of interest to American Catholics, in this day when Spain is looked upon as the international villain in the matter of religious freedom, that Father Roos, as a Jesuit, was prevented from accepting an invitation in January, 1954, from the theological faculty of the University of Oslo to lecture on Kierkegaard in Norway's capital city.

The infamous Article 2 of the Norwegian Constitution forbidding entry to Jesuits is not an unenforced remnant of a more intolerant era, since the ban was specifically upheld in Father Roos' case by the Norwegian Department of Justice.

We are indebted to Father Roos, and to translator, Father Brackett, for this contribution to the literature on Soren Kierkegaard.

ROBERT PAUL MOHAN, S.S.

A HISTORY OF MODERN EUROPEAN PHILOSOPHY. By James Collins. Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1954. Pp. x+854. $9.75.

Dr. James Collins of Saint Louis University, author of *The Mind of Kierkegaard* and *The Existentialists,* has written a masterly account of the course of nonscholastic philosophy in Europe during the past four and a half centuries. After an introductory chapter on the historical study of modern philosophy, he discusses the renaissance background (Machiavelli, Bruno, and others), scientific outlooks and methods (Francis Bacon, Galileo, and Newton), Hobbes, Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, Kant, Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, Schopenhauer, Comte, John Stuart Mill, Nietzsche, and Bergson. It would have been well to include Rousseau and Marx, perhaps in preference to Comte and Mill, if a choice had to be made. However, lines must be drawn, and adequate treatment, such as is given here to the men chosen, is far better than a shorter consideration of a larger number of philosophers. Well-selected and well-annotated bibliographies are placed at the end of the various chapters, and further references are found in the footnotes. The book is well produced. If the price seems high, both present printing costs and the size of the volume must be kept in mind. It contains, for instance, a section of 245 pages on Kant and his immediate successors, and this of itself would constitute a good-sized book.

A History of Modern European Philosophy has so many good qualities that it is difficult to point to all of them. It is clearly written; it is objective and fair; and it is comprehensive and thorough. Its freshness of approach and independence of judgment are stimulating and should arouse the reader to further thought and study. As a consequence of such things, it can teach not only those for whom it is primarily designed, "students who have some acquaintance with

Scholastic philosophy," but also those trained in nonscholastic doctrines. It can render great service to general readers as well. In his statement of the tenets of the various men that he discusses, Dr. Collins has gone first of all to their own works. He rightly observes: "The first step in historical studies is to submit the mind to the contingent evidence and thus to accompany the individual philosophers over their own terrain, relying upon *precise description* rather than on demonstrative methods." This establishment of fact, of what certain men have thought and said, is itself subservient to a higher end, the establishment of the truth of things. This Thomistic attitude involves the judicial cast of mind: "Carping criticism, a closed mind, and blind prejudice exclude one effectively from making fruitful contact with the sound insights that course through the channels of history. Only a scrupulous examination of all the available evidence can render service to a living philosophy." This should lead us both to avoid the errors that are abundantly present in the history of philosophy and to discover new truths. "The story of philosophical development is not a black-and-white record, with unmitigated error on one side and exclusively possessed truth on the other." Further, "the discovery of truth is a *co-operative task* of the human race. One man's positive contribution may be quite small, when viewed in isolation, but it can be integrated with the findings of others." With these principles in mind, the author takes up the work of the thinkers that have been named. In each case he gives a satisfying account of the man's doctrine and passes convincing judgments upon it.

An indication may be given of the spirit and manner in which this work is written by quoting the passage which concludes both the study of Henri Bergson and the entire book.

> Bergson's theory of religion casts revealing illumination upon subsidiary, social functions of religion and upon its highest manifestation, in mysticism. But it leaves untouched both the speculative roots of religion and the natural moral virtue of religion. Metaphysical and methodological commitments prevent Bergson from surveying the *middle ranges* of religious life. Between the evolutionary *divergent* motives of pressure and inspiration stand the *convergent* religious principles of rational recognition of God and free adherence of one's whole person to Him, as is His due. God, not a social instinct, is the ultimate basis of moral and religious obligation. Both for the ordinary religious person and the Christian mystic, moreover, it is by no means a matter of indifference whether religious union is with God or with some earthly principle, no matter how dynamic and powerful.